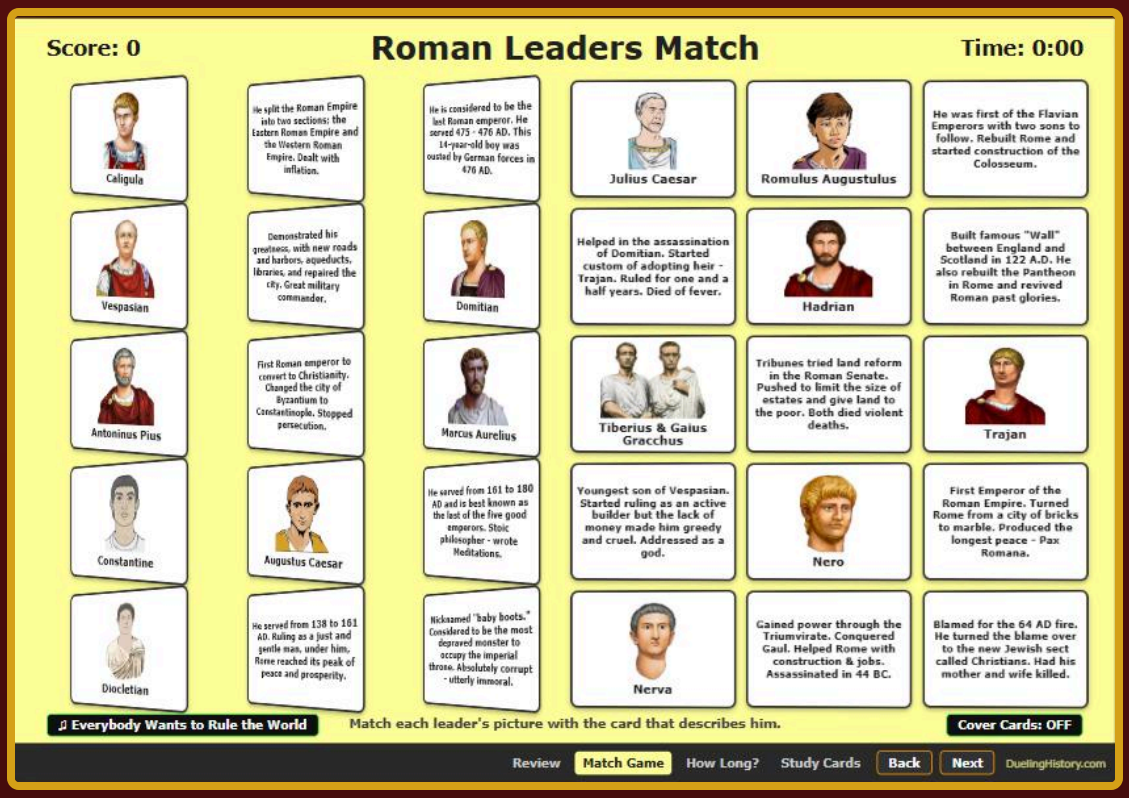
S · P · Q · R

Ancient Roman Leaders

Teacher Guide · From the Gracchus Brothers to the Last Emperor of the West

133 BC – AD 476



FREE **No Login** **No Membership** **Runs in Any Browser**

- ✦ Illustrated review of 15 leaders
- ✦ "How Long Did They Stay?" chart
- ✦ Roman Leaders Crossword (15 clues)
- ✦ Emperor Spin clue game (62 clues)
- ✦ Roman Leaders Match game
- ✦ Printable study cards
- ✦ Drag-and-drop Timeline
- ✦ Answer keys & discussion prompts

Play it here:

duelinghistory.com/history/RomanLeaders/

Grades 6–10 · World History · Ancient Rome

Welcome to Rome

This resource is a set of free browser activities on **DuelingHistory.com** that walks students through fifteen leaders who shaped Rome, from the land-reform fights of the Gracchus brothers to the fall of the West in AD 476. This guide tells you what each activity does, how to run it, and gives you the answer keys.

> **Start here:** `duelinghistory.com/history/RomanLeaders/`
> The Roman Leaders page is the doorway to everything below. Put it on your projector, post it in your LMS, or share the link with students. Nothing to install, no accounts, no fees.

What's on the Roman Leaders page

Activity	What students do
Video: Antony and Cleopatra	A comic 1964 telling of the story (Andy Griffith). A fun hook for Julius Caesar, Antony and Augustus.
Video: Roman Emperors	Emperor coin portraits set to "Everybody Wants to Rule the World." Great for an opening or a closing.
Ancient Roman Leaders (Study)	Four parts: Review slideshow · Match Game · How Long? · Study Cards
Roman Leaders Crossword	Fill in all fifteen leaders from clues; check answers as they go.
Roman Leaders Timeline	Drag each leader card to the right place on a 150 BC – AD 500 timeline.
Emperor Spin	Spin the wheel for a clue, click the leader who matches it.

The fifteen leaders

The Gracchus Brothers · Julius Caesar · Augustus Caesar · Caligula · Nero · Vespasian · Domitian · Nerva · Trajan · Hadrian · Antoninus Pius · Marcus Aurelius · Diocletian · Constantine · Romulus Augustulus

Learning goals

Students will be able to...

- Identify fifteen key Roman leaders and name one major accomplishment or failure of each.
- Place the leaders in chronological order from the late Republic to the fall of the Western Empire.
- Explain how Rome moved from Republic to Empire, through the Pax Romana, to division and decline.
- Compare "good" and "bad" emperors and judge what made a ruler effective.

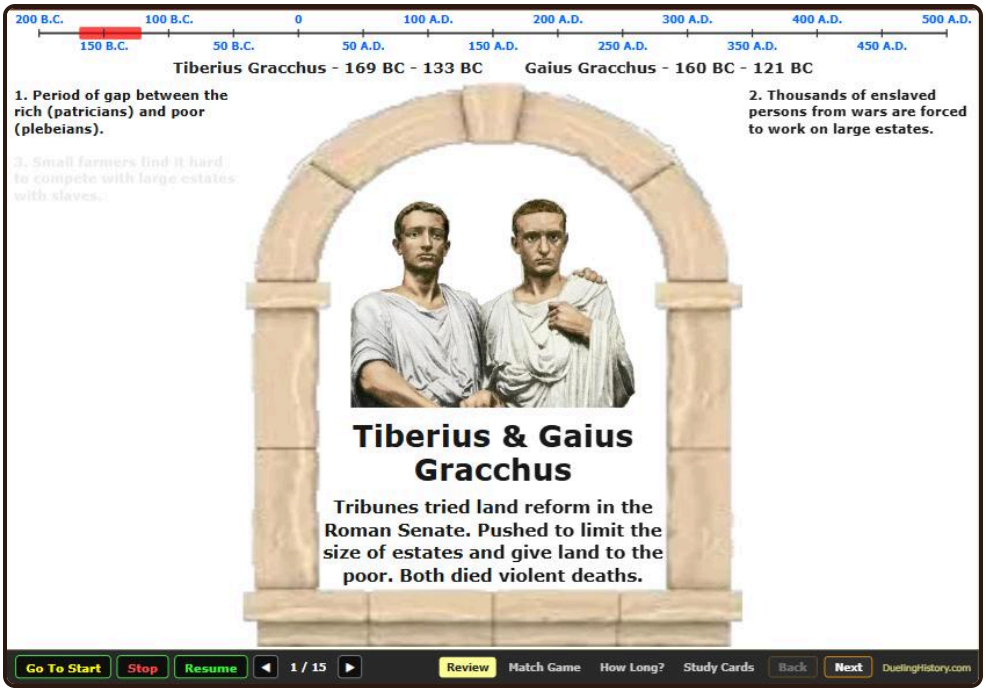
What you need

- Any computer, Chromebook or tablet with a current web browser. Works on a projector or interactive whiteboard for whole-class play.
- Speakers if you want the sound effects and videos.
- Optional: printer for the Study Cards and the Crossword.

1 · Ancient Roman Leaders: Review & Match

Open **Ancient Roman Leaders** from the Roman Leaders page. The menu bar along the bottom moves between the four parts: **Review · Match Game · How Long? · Study Cards**. **Back** and **Next** step through them in order.

Review slideshow



Each leader appears inside a Roman arch, with a red marker showing where he falls on the timeline across the top.

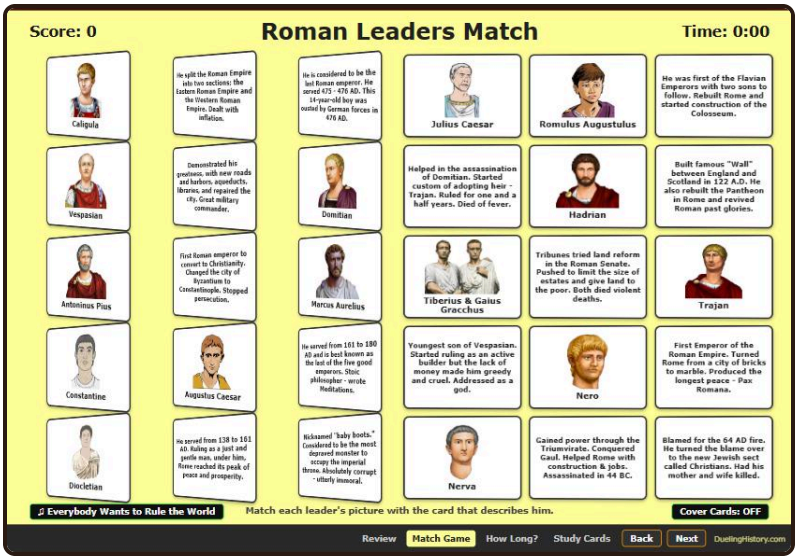
- Press **Resume** to start. Each slide shows the leader's portrait, life dates and a short summary while key facts appear on either side.
- **Stop** pauses the slide for discussion; ◀ ▶ step one leader at a time; **Go To Start** returns to the beginning. The counter shows where you are (1 / 15).

Teacher tip: Run the review on the projector and press Stop on each leader. Ask, "Was he good for Rome or bad for Rome?" and have students vote with a thumbs up or down before you move on.

Roman Leaders Match

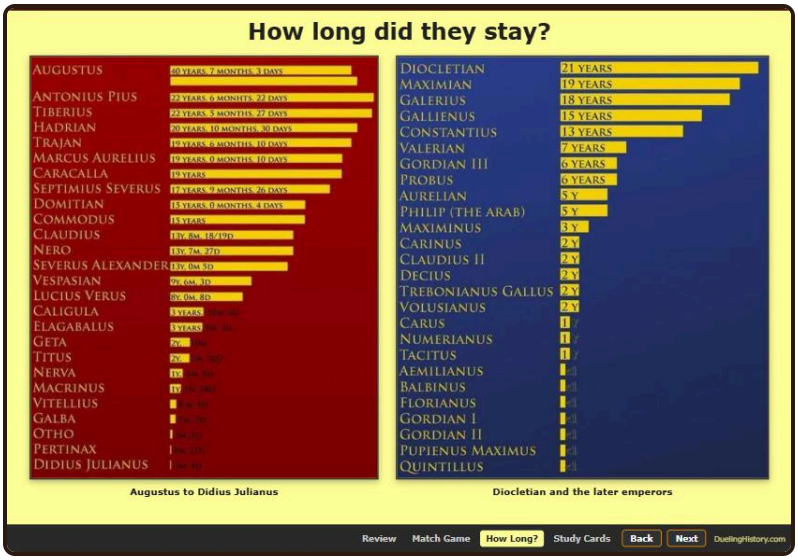
- Students match each leader's **picture** with the **card that describes him**. A score and timer run at the top.
- **Cover Cards: ON** plays it as a memory game, with face-down SPQR cards. **Cover Cards: OFF** shows every card face up, an easier version for first-time learners or students who need support.
- The ♫ **Everybody Wants to Rule the World** button opens the Roman Emperors video.

1 · How Long? & Study Cards



Match Game with Cover Cards turned OFF: pictures and descriptions are face up.

How long did they stay?



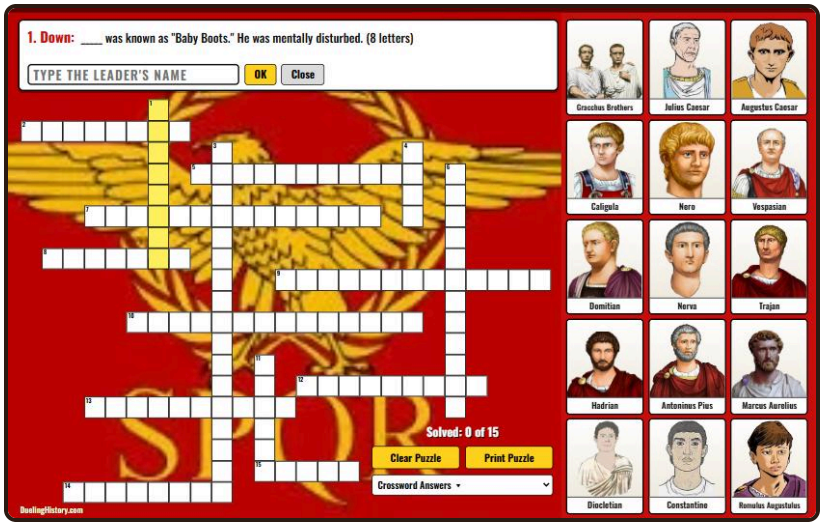
Reign lengths from Augustus to Didius Julianus (left) and from Diocletian through the later emperors (right).

This bar chart shows how long each emperor held power, from Augustus's 40 years down to reigns of only a few weeks. Use it to start a conversation: *Why did some emperors last decades while others lasted months? What happened to Rome when emperors changed quickly?* (This chart includes many emperors beyond the fifteen.)

Study Cards

All fifteen leaders on one screen. **Click any card** to open it full size; use **◀ Previous / Next ▶** to flip through. **Print Cards** prints one leader per page, which works well for stations, a gallery walk, or a study packet.

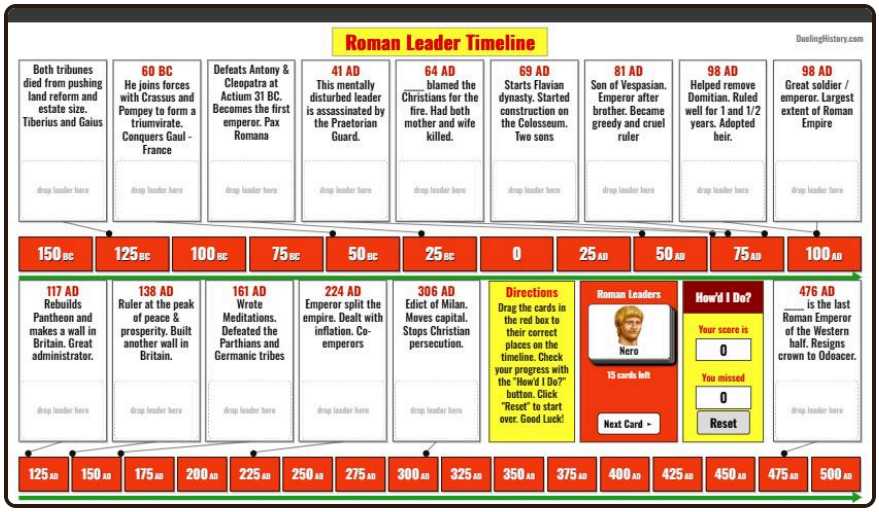
2 · Roman Leaders Crossword



Click a numbered square to see its clue, type the leader's name, and press OK. Portraits on the right help students who are stuck.

- To enter a word, students click its **first (numbered) square**. The clue appears at the top with a letter count; they type the name and press **OK**. Clues marked "Two Words" need both names.
- The counter tracks progress (**Solved: 0 of 15**). **Clear Puzzle** starts over and **Print Puzzle** makes a paper copy.
- The **Crossword Answers** menu shows one answer at a time, or all of them. Hide it, or tell students it counts as a hint!

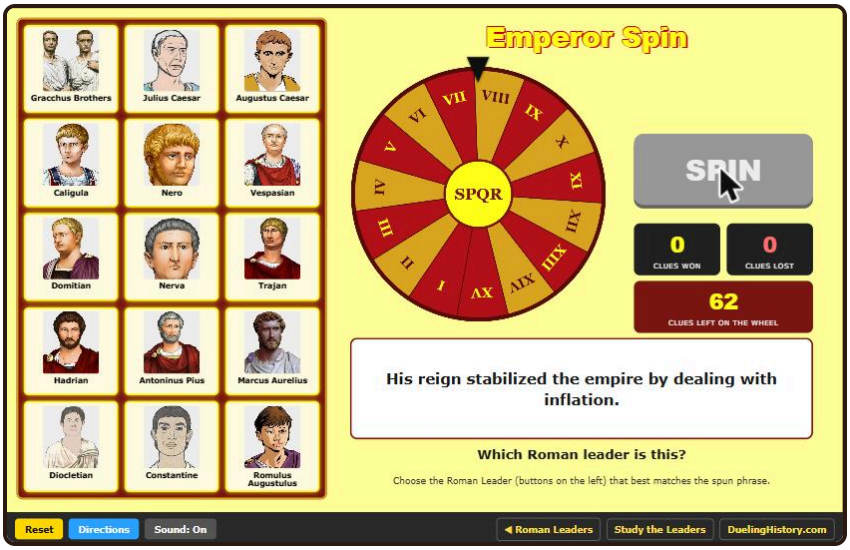
3 · Roman Leaders Timeline



Drag the leader in the red "Roman Leaders" box onto the matching clue card on the timeline.

- A leader card appears in the red box. Students read the clue cards and drag the leader to the right one. **Next Card ▸** skips to another leader.
- **How'd I Do?** scores placements and shows how many were missed. **Reset** starts over. A perfect score puts all 15 in place.

4 · Emperor Spin



The wheel lands on a clue; students click the leader on the left who matches it.

1. Click **SPIN**. The wheel stops on a clue about one of the fifteen leaders.
2. Click the leader on the left who best matches the clue.
3. Right answer: the clue goes to **Clues Won**. Wrong answer: it goes to **Clues Lost** and the correct leader lights up green.
4. Keep spinning until all **62 clues** are off the wheel. **Reset** starts a new game; **Sound** turns effects on or off.

Whole-class version: Split the room into two teams and take turns at the board. A team keeps spinning until it misses, and then the other team takes over. The team with the most clues won is the winner.

Suggested lesson flow (two 50-minute class periods)

When	Activity
Day 1 · 5 min	Hook: show the **Roman Emperors** video. Ask, "Why would anyone want to rule the world?"
Day 1 · 25 min	**Review** slideshow as a class; students take notes on a leader chart (or the printed Study Cards).
Day 1 · 15 min	**Match Game** in pairs. Cover Cards OFF first, then ON as a challenge.
Day 1 · 5 min	Exit ticket: "Name one good emperor and one bad emperor, and explain why."
Day 2 · 5 min	Warm-up: read the **First & Last** dialogue (p. 8) aloud with two student volunteers.
Day 2 · 15 min	**Timeline**: students work individually and record their How'd I Do? score.
Day 2 · 15 min	**Crossword** online or on paper.
Day 2 · 15 min	**Emperor Spin** as a team game to review before a test.

Leader Reference Chart

#	Leader	Lived	Remember him for...
1	**Tiberius & Gaius Gracchus**	169–133 BC / 160–121 BC	Tribunes who pushed land reform: limits on big estates, land for the poor. Both died violently.
2	**Julius Caesar**	100–44 BC	First Triumvirate with Pompey and Crassus; conquered Gaul; crossed the Rubicon; assassinated in 44 BC.
3	**Augustus Caesar**	63 BC – AD 14	First emperor; defeated Antony and Cleopatra at Actium; turned Rome "from brick to marble"; began the Pax Romana.
4	**Caligula**	AD 12–41	Nicknamed "Little Boots"; cruel and unstable; killed by the Praetorian Guard.
5	**Nero**	AD 37–68	Blamed the Great Fire of AD 64 on Christians; had his mother and wife killed.
6	**Vespasian**	AD 9–79	First Flavian emperor; rebuilt Rome; began the Colosseum but did not see it finished.
7	**Domitian**	AD 51–96	Younger son of Vespasian; began as a builder, became greedy and cruel; demanded to be addressed as a god.
8	**Nerva**	AD 30–98	Ruled about a year and a half; started the custom of adopting a capable heir (Trajan).
9	**Trajan**	AD 53–117	From Spain; great general; empire reached its largest size; roads, harbors, aqueducts; Trajan's Column.
10	**Hadrian**	AD 76–138	Built Hadrian's Wall in Britain (AD 122); rebuilt the Pantheon; strong administrator.
11	**Antoninus Pius**	AD 86–161	Just and gentle; Rome at the peak of peace and prosperity; built another wall in Britain.
12	**Marcus Aurelius**	AD 121–180	Stoic philosopher who wrote *Meditations*; last of the "Five Good Emperors."
13	**Diocletian**	c. AD 244–311	Split the empire into East and West; fought inflation; still persecuted Christians.
14	**Constantine**	c. AD 272–337	First Christian emperor; Edict of Milan ended persecution; renamed Byzantium Constantinople.
15	**Romulus Augustulus**	c. AD 460 – after 476	Teenage "last emperor" of the West; removed by the Germanic leader Odoacer in AD 476.

Discussion questions

1. The Gracchus brothers and Julius Caesar both tried to help Rome's poor. Why did that make powerful senators so angry?
2. Augustus ruled for 40 years and many later emperors lasted less than two. What does that tell you about Rome after the Pax Romana?
3. Nerva started the custom of *adopting* the best man as heir instead of passing power to a son. How did that work out for the next 80 years?
4. Diocletian split the empire, and Constantine moved the capital east. Did these decisions save Rome or doom the West?
5. Pick one "good" and one "bad" emperor. What separated them?

Answer Keys

Crossword

#	Answer
1 Down	Caligula
2 Across	Domitian
3 Down	Romulus Augustulus
4 Down	Nero
5 Across	Constantine
6 Down	Julius Caesar
7 Across	Augustus Caesar
8 Across	Hadrian
9 Across	Antoninus Pius
10 Across	Marcus Aurelius
11 Down	Trajan
12 Across	Vespasian
13 Across	Diocletian
14 Across	Gracchus
15 Across	Nerva

Timeline (in order)

Date	Leader
133 BC	Gracchus Brothers
60 BC	Julius Caesar
27 BC	Augustus Caesar
AD 41	Caligula
AD 64	Nero
AD 69	Vespasian
AD 81	Domitian
AD 96	Nerva
AD 98	Trajan
AD 117	Hadrian
AD 138	Antoninus Pius
AD 161	Marcus Aurelius
AD 284	Diocletian
AD 306	Constantine
AD 476	Romulus Augustulus

Warm-up: First & Last

The first emperor of Rome meets the last emperor of the West.

AUGUSTUS: So you're the one who lost it. I found Rome a city of brick and left it a city of marble.

ROMULUS AUGUSTULUS: With respect, sir, I was fourteen. My father put me on the throne, and Odoacer took it off me less than a year later.

AUGUSTUS: Fourteen! I was only eighteen when I started. But I had forty years to get it right.

ROMULUS AUGUSTULUS: And I inherited five hundred years of everyone else's mistakes. Caligula, Nero, a split empire, inflation...

AUGUSTUS: Hmm. Fair point. Let's ask the class who really lost Rome.

Ask students: Was the fall of the West Romulus Augustulus's fault? Name two earlier leaders from the timeline who helped cause it, or two who held it together.

More Free Games at DuelingHistory.com

Every game on DuelingHistory.com is free, with no login, no membership and no fees. Find more ancient-world activities in the **History** section:

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About the author

These activities began as Flash and ToolBook programs built for a real history classroom and have been rebuilt for today's browsers so a new generation of students can play them. The idea has always been the same: get students interacting, and the learning follows.

Feedback

If this resource helped your class, a rating and a short review on Teachers Pay Teachers (store: **FlashNHistory**) is greatly appreciated. It helps other teachers find these free games.

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