Name _____ Date _____

Roman Citizens Answer Key

Part 1. The Lives of Roman Citizens
As you read each biography of a Roman citizen, answer the questions for that citizen. After you've read all four biographies, complete the last column by ranking the Romans from most rights to least.

	Is he or she a Roman citizen? How do you know?	**Does he or she have the ability to rise within Roman society? How do you know?**	**Ranking of Rights (1 – least to 4 – most)**
Carpenter Valerius Silvanus	Yes. Valerius is a free citizen but must serve the elites.	No or not likely. Valerius rose within his trade from worker to foreman to contractor. But he's probably not going to move higher than being a skilled craftsman.	3
Slave Fortunata	No. Fortunata was captured from her home and now serves in the fields.	No or not likely. She must wait to see if her master frees her.	1
Soldier Quintus Valerius Secundus	Yes. He is a free citizen and soldier but must serve in the military for 25 years.	Maybe. It's possible to rise in rank through the army, but a difficult path.	4
Hairdresser Tryphosa	No. She serves as a house slave to a family in Judea but still considers herself to be above "barbarian" and non-Roman populations.	No. Her mother was a house slave too. She could only rise if she was granted freedom.	2
Other groups from the readings: Patricians, wealthy plebeians, Senators	Yes.	Yes.	Senators would rank above everyone on this list.

© 2015 National Geographic Society

Roman Citizens Answer Key, continued

Part 2. Examining Citizenship in the Roman Empire

Answer the questions below in complete sentences.

1. For the Romans you ranked as having the most rights (numbers 3 and 4), what did those citizens gain from being a part of the Roman system? What, if anything, did the lowest-ranked Romans gain from participation in the social system? Top ranked Romans had the potential to rise through hard work. A soldier could move up the ranks in the military. The carpenter Valerius could move up by getting very good at his trade. All gained the basic necessities of life from the Roman system, with the notable exception of freedom for Tryphosa and Fortunata. But in a time period that could be violent and brutal, the Roman system provided a level of security unavailable outside the Empire.

2. Based on your reading of the documents, was social mobility possible in ancient Rome? Why or why not? Yes. Social mobility was possible in the Roman Empire but only for freed peoples, not slaves. Even for those who were free, there were still limits to their ability to move up ranks in the social system. So even though there was some mobility, it was not widespread.

3. What other sources could expand our knowledge of the Roman social system? How? Responses will vary. Having only read about four Romans, it would be good to expand our knowledge and perspective. We did not read about a Roman from the top of society, so hearing a voice from that group would be useful. In addition, did geography shape the response? If we looked at Romans from different parts of the Empire would their responses have varied?

4. Do you see elements of the Roman social system in the world today? If so, where? If not, why not? While slavery does not exist in the United States today, one could argue that rising inequality is making our social system more rigid. Wealth accumulates at the top of the social structure and those at the bottom struggle to move up.

© 2015 National Geographic Society