

Name _____

Date _____

Roman Technology Answer Key

Part 1. Describe each major Roman technological development and then explain how Romans used this technology to maintain control over their territory.

Technological Development	Description	How did this development help the Roman Empire control its territory?
Aqueduct	Aqueducts were elevated channels that moved water from mountains to cities. They provided drinking water for Roman cities as well as water for public works like fountains and baths.	Aqueducts allowed Roman cities to grow and expand with sources of clean, sanitary drinking water. They also helped earn the goodwill of citizens through public works projects.
Military weapons, armor, and shelter	Romans developed siege weapons like the catapult and onager to attack enemy cities. Roman armor, made from iron, was much stronger than that of many of Rome's less developed enemies. An example of this was the pilum, a javelin-like weapon with a soft iron head that had limited range but caused significant damage. In addition, Roman armies traveled and built fortifications to prevent ambushes at night.	Roman military strength allowed the Roman Empire to expand, defeating enemy armies as well as suppressing any potential rebellions that might occur among the citizenry.

© 2015 National Geographic Society

Roman Technology Answer Key, continued

Technological Development	Description	How did this development help the Roman Empire control its territory?
Roads and surveying	Using advanced surveying tools like the “groma,” Romans were able to build long, straight roads to facilitate travel and trade.	Romans could travel quickly from city to city on well-paved roads, facilitating communication. This allowed the government to communicate with and control territories.
Food and baths	Romans spread Roman culture around the empire, including Roman foods and Roman baths.	By spreading Roman culture, the Roman Empire brought local populations into the Roman world, which made them more likely to accept Roman authority.

© 2015 National Geographic Society

Roman Technology Answer Key, continued

Part 2. Answer the questions below in complete sentences.

1. How did these technologies help the Roman Empire maintain control of their territory?

Technology allowed the Roman Empire to maintain control of its territory with military power to suppress potential rebellions, as well as domestic technologies that helped unify the people under Roman control. Baths and Roman foods brought Roman culture to newly conquered peoples. Roads allowed the Roman government to communicate more easily with its far-flung territories, as did signals and codes.

2. For the Romans, was “necessity the mother of invention?” Why or why not? Yes. Many of these inventions were created because the Romans had difficulty controlling their territory. For example, as Roman cities expanded, more Romans needed freshwater to survive, which led to the creation of the aqueduct. Without the need for new technologies, they would not have been invented.

3. For the Romans, do you think the road was as important a technology to them as the mobile phone is to us today? Why or why not? Possible response: Yes. Both are tools that make it easier to send messages over distances.

4. Do you think the Roman political system would have been able to survive without these technologies? Why or why not? Possible response: No. Without the military technology, the armies would have been unable to protect the border and frontier from invasions. The Roman political system needed communication technologies to ensure its government could communicate.