

## Legacy of Rome: Art

The Romans adopted parts of other cultures. This was true of Roman art. The Romans were especially influenced by the art of the Greeks. In fact, historians often speak of **Greco-Roman** art.

The Romans were skilled in creating realistic statues. They imitated Greek sculptures, but they were particularly good at making their sculpted images lifelike.



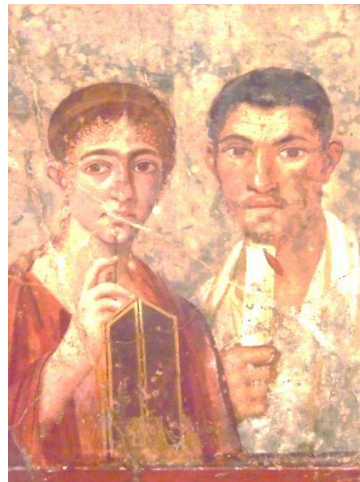
A mosaic is a picture made up of small, colored tiles.

Roman frescoes often showed three-dimensional landscapes and other scenes. Looking at one of these frescoes was almost like looking through the wall at a scene outside. You've probably seen similar murals at restaurants, banks, and other buildings.

Romans were also great patrons (sponsors) of art. They paid thousands of painters, sculptors, and craftspeople to create their works. As a result, the Romans left behind many examples to inspire future generations.

A thousand years after the fall of the empire, Roman art was rediscovered during the period called the **Renaissance**. Great artists

The homes of wealthy Romans were decorated with colorful murals and **mosaics**. Again, the Romans took existing art forms and made them their own. They painted beautiful frescoes, a type of mural, on wet plaster with water-based paints.



A fresco of a typical Roman family

like Michelangelo revived the Greco-Roman style in their paintings and sculptures.

A good example is the famous ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome. The ceiling shows scenes from the Bible painted by Michelangelo in the 1500s. A Roman would feel right at home looking up at this amazing creation.

Roman art has continued to influence painters and sculptors. Roman styles were especially popular during the early days of the United States. Americans imitated these styles to give their art dignity and nobility. You can still see statues in Washington, D.C. that reflect a strong Roman influence.

The Romans also brought a sense of style and luxury to everyday objects. They made highly decorative bottles of blown glass. A bottle for wine might be made in the shape of a cluster of grapes. Romans also developed the arts of gem cutting and metalworking. One popular art form was the cameo which is a gem that is carved to show a portrait of a person's head or a scene. The Romans wore cameos as jewelry and used them to decorate vases and other objects. You can find examples of these art forms today.



A typical Roman sculpture.

## Legacy of Rome: Architecture



The Roman Colosseum was stripped for building material after the empire fell.

The Romans' greatest contributions to science and technology came in the practical field of architecture. Roman builders learned from the Greeks, Etruscans, and others. Then they added their own genius to take feats of construction to new heights.

The Romans learned how to use the arch, the vault, and the dome to build huge structures. A **vault** is an arch used to support a ceiling or roof. A **dome** is a vault in the shape of a hemisphere that rests on a circular wall.

The Romans were the first to make widespread use of concrete. They made concrete by mixing broken stone with sand, cement, and water, and then allowing the mixture to harden. With concrete, they were able to build much bigger arches than anyone had attempted before. Roman baths and other public buildings often had great arched vaults. The Pantheon, a temple that still stands in Rome, is famous for its huge dome.

The Romans also invented a new kind of building, the stadium. These were large, open-air structures. The Romans used concrete to build tunnels into the famous Colosseum in Rome. The tunnels made it easy for spectators to reach their seats. Modern football stadiums still use this feature.

The grand style of Roman buildings has inspired many architects through the centuries. One Roman innovation that was widely copied was the triumphal arch. This was a huge monument built to celebrate great victories or achievements. A famous modern example is the Arc

de Triomphe (TREE-umf) (Arch of Triumph) in Paris, France. This monument celebrates the victories of the French emperor Napoleon in the Early 1800s. Today it is the national war memorial of France.

You see a Roman influence in the design of many modern churches, banks, and government buildings. A fine example is the Capitol building, the home of the U.S. Congress in Washington D.C.



The Arc de Triomphe in France is an example of roman arches.

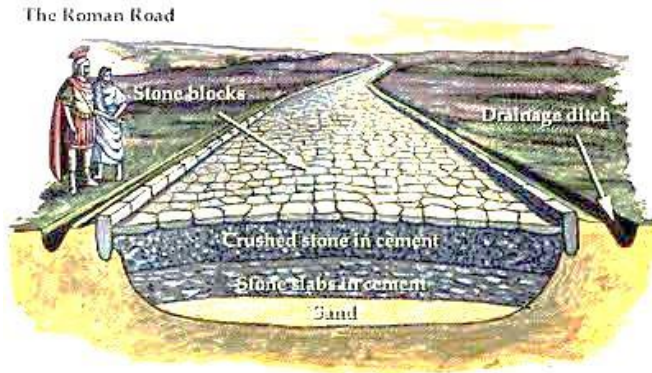


The U.S. Capitol building boasts all of Roman architectural achievements including columns, arches, domes, and a vaulted ceiling.



## Legacy of Rome: Engineering

The Romans' greatest contributions to science and technology came in the practical field of engineering. Roman builders learned from the Greeks, Etruscans, and others. Then they added their own genius to take feats of construction to new heights.



A cross-section of a Roman road. How is it similar to the roads built by the Gupta empire?

empire. The Romans built their roads with layers of stone, sand, and gravel. Their techniques set the standard of road building for 2,000 years. Cars in some parts of Europe still drive on Freeways built over old Roman roads.

The Romans also set a new standard for building aqueducts. They did not invent the aqueduct, but once again the Romans learned the technique and expanded on it. They created a system of aqueducts for Rome. The aqueducts brought water from about 60 miles away to the homes of the wealthiest citizens, as well as to the city's public baths and fountains. The Romans built aqueducts in other parts of the empire as well. The water system in Segovia, Spain, still uses part of an ancient Roman aqueduct. Roman arches from aqueducts can still be found in Europe, North Africa, and Asia Minor.

The Romans changed engineering as well as architecture. They were the greatest builders of roads, bridges, and aqueducts in the ancient world.

Nearly 53,000 miles of road connected Rome with the frontiers of the

## Legacy of Rome: Philosophy

Like art and architecture, Roman philosophy and law were greatly influenced by the Greeks. But the Romans made contributions of their own that they passed on to future generations.

Stoicism was a philosophy that came from the Greeks. Many upper-class Romans made it their own.

Stoics believed that a divine (godly) intelligence ruled all of nature. A person's soul was a spark of that divine intelligence. "Living rightly" meant living in a way that agreed with nature.

To the Stoics, the one truly good thing in life was to have a good character. This meant having virtues (good characteristics) such as self-control and courage.

Stoics disagreed with those who said that happiness meant only avoiding pain and experiencing pleasure. They prized duty and the welfare of the community over their personal comfort. They said that true happiness was the peace of mind that came from living up to Stoic ideals.

The most famous Roman Stoic was the emperor Marcus Aurelius. Aurelius wrote down his private thoughts in a book he called "To Himself." Later it was given the title *Meditations*. In his writings, Aurelius constantly reminded himself of Stoic ideals. "Do not worry," he wrote, "If you encounter ungratefulness, insults, disloyalty, or selfishness. If you think and act rightly, none of these things can hurt you."

Stoics were famous for bearing pain and suffering bravely and quietly. To this day, we call someone who behaves this way "stoic."



A bust of Marcus Aurelius, a famous Stoic

## Legacy of Rome: Language

One legacy of Rome that still affects us every day is the Roman language: Latin. We still use the Latin alphabet (although Roman Latin uses 23 letters and English uses 26). Many of our words come from Latin; even Latin proverbs are still in use. For example, look at the reverse side of a U.S. dime and you'll see the United States motto *E pluribus unum* ("Out of many, one").

Several modern European languages developed from Latin,

Latin Root	Meaning	English words
Anima	Life, breath, soul	animal
Civil	Citizen, community	Civic
Lex, legalis	Law, legal	Legislature
Manus	Hand	Manual
Militare	To serve as a soldier	Military
Portare	To carry	Portable
Unus	One	United

including Italian, Spanish, and French. English is a Germanic language, but it was strongly influenced by the French-speaking Normans who conquered England in 1066ad. English has borrowed heavily from Latin, both

directly and by way of French.

You can see the influence of Latin on many of the words we use today. For example, recall that our calendar comes from the one adopted by Julius Caesar. The names of several months come from Latin. *Augustus* honors Caesar Augustus, *September* comes from the Latin word meaning "the seventh month" and *October* means "The eighth month" (the Roman year started in March).

Many English words start with Latin prefixes. A prefix is a set of letters at the beginning of a word that carries its own meaning. Attaching a prefix to a root word creates new word with a new meaning. In fact, the word *prefix* is formed this way. It comes from *pre* ("in front of") and *fix* ("fasten" or "attach").

Other English words come from Latin root words. For instance, a *manual* is derived from *manus*, the Latin word for "hand."

Finally we still often use Roman numerals. The Romans used a system of letters to write numbers. You may have seen Roman numerals used on

clocks, sundials, and the first pages of books like text books. You might also spot Roman numerals on buildings and in some movie credits to show the year in which they were made.

The Romans combined the seven letters shown in the table to express larger numbers. Putting letters *after* another adds the value of the additional letters. For example: VIII = 5+3=8 and XX = 10+10=20. Putting a letter *before* a letter with a greater value subtracts its value. For example: IV = 5-1=4 and IX = 10-1=9.

Latin Prefix	Meaning	English word
In, im, il	Not	Inactive, Impossible, Illogical
Inter	Among, between	International
Com, co	Together, with	Communicate, cooperate
Pre	Before	Precede
Post	After, behind	Postpone
Re	Back, again	Remember
Semi	Half	semicircle

Basic numerals	Meaning	Other numerals	Meaning
I	1	II	2
V	5	III	3
X	10	IV	4
L	50	VI	6
C	100	VII	7
D	500	VIII	8
M	1000	IX	9

## Legacy of Rome: Law

Like art and architecture, Roman law was greatly influenced by the Greeks. But the Romans made contributions of their own that they passed on to future generations.

The Stoics' belief about justice and nature fit very well with Roman ideas about law. Roman law covered marriages, inheritance, contracts (agreements) between people, and countless other parts of daily life. Modern law codes in European countries like France and Italy are based in part on ancient Roman laws.

Another legacy of the Romans was the Roman idea of justice. The Romans believed that there was a universal law of justice that came from nature. By this natural law, every person had rights. Romans spread this idea by applying it to all citizens of the empire. Judges in Roman courts tried to make just (fair) decisions that respected people's rights.

Like people everywhere, the Romans did not always live up to their ideals. Their courts did not treat the poor or slaves as equal to the rich. Emperors often made bad laws. But the ideals of justice and natural rights live on. Like judges in Roman courts, modern-day judges make decisions based on these ideals as well as on written law. Similarly,

many people today believe that all humans have basic rights that no written law can take away.



The nine judges of the Supreme Court of the U.S.