

Emperors and the Army

Week 10 • Tuesday • Who Ran the Roman Empire?

Reading Time

Who was in charge of such a giant empire? The **emperor**! The first emperor was **Augustus**, who began his rule in 27 BC. He brought peace after years of fighting, fixed roads, and made Rome beautiful. Romans said he found a city of brick and left it a city of marble!

The empire was protected by the mighty Roman army. Soldiers called **legionaries** wore metal armor and helmets, and carried a sword, a spear, and a big curved shield. They marched together in groups of about 5,000 called **legions**.

Roman soldiers were famous for teamwork. In the 'tortoise' formation, they locked their shields together over their heads and sides — like a turtle shell — so arrows and rocks bounced right off! Soldiers also built roads, bridges, and forts wherever they went.

Reading Questions

1. Who was the first Roman emperor?

2. What was a legion?

3. How did the 'tortoise' formation protect soldiers?

Fill in the Blanks

Augustus

legion

shields

emperor

tortoise

1. The ruler of the Roman Empire was called the _____.

2. The first emperor was named _____.

3. A group of about 5,000 soldiers was a _____.

4. In the _____ formation, soldiers looked like a turtle.

5. Soldiers locked their _____ together for protection.

A Legionary's Gear

Write YES if a Roman soldier used it, or NO if he did not.

Gear	YES or NO?
Metal helmet	
Curved shield	
Laser blaster	
Short sword	
Bicycle	
Spear	

Hands-On: Tortoise Formation

You need: couch cushions or pieces of cardboard and at least one helper.

Try the tortoise formation! Hold your 'shields' over your heads and sides while a grown-up gently tosses a soft ball or rolled socks. Did your shell protect you? Roman teamwork in action!

Think About It

1. Why was teamwork so important for Roman soldiers?

2. Why do you think soldiers also built roads and bridges?
