

Document A

Based on Oswald Spengler's, *THE DECLINE OF THE WEST*

German historian Oswald Spengler argued civilizations, similar to individuals, go through a life-cycle with distinct stages. Spengler applies these stages to his study of the great ancient and classical civilizations (Egypt, India, Rome, etc). Spengler argues, like human beings, civilizations also must one day die. Listed below are the four basic stages of the cultural "life" and "death" of a civilization, according to Spengler.

The stages are equated to the four seasons of the year:

Stage I	"Springtime"	Culture shows great willpower, or "Soul". In this period, people of a culture produce art and political forms to express their view of the world. The knight/warrior, and the men of noble blood are the rulers.
Stage II	"Summertime"	The first stirrings of revolt against springtime form. Pre-existing attitudes towards ruler's, power, and religion are challenged. This stage marks beginning of an urban-based culture. The merchant becomes a powerful member of society.
Stage III	"Autumn"	In this stage the culture becomes a powerful civilization ruled by city-dwellers. Government becomes more complex. Religion is overshadowed by belief in the human mind and scientific reasoning.
Stage IV	"Winter"	The culture enters a state of self-doubt. It looks for a new philosophy of life. Former connections with the land (peasantry) are almost completely lost. The masses of the city are the ruling force. The culture has lost some of its identity, will, and "Soul".

Spengler estimated the life spans of the following civilizations, based on his theory & study of history:

- Egyptian Culture Begins 3000 BC – Declines 1500 BC
- Indian Culture Begins 1550 BC – Declines 400 BC
- Classical Culture Begins 1100 BC – Declines 27 BC (rise of Augustus & beginning of Roman Empire)
- Roman Culture Begins 509 BC – Declines 476 AD
- Arabian Culture Begins 0 – Declines 1000 AD

Document B

Roman Emperors, 235-285 CE

Emperor	Reign	Cause of Death
Maximus	235-238	Assassination
Gordian I & II(col-rulers)	238	Suicide, Killed in Battle
Gordian III	238-244	Possible assassination
Philip the Arab	244-249	Killed in Battle
Decius	249-251	Killed in Battle
Hostilian	251	Possible Plague
Gallus	251-253	Assassination
Aemilianus	253	Assassination
Valerian and Gallienus	253-260	Died as a slave, Assassination
Quintillus	268-270	Assassination or Suicide
Aurelian	270-275	Assassination
Tacitus	275-276	Possible Assassination
Florianus	276	Assassination
Probus	276-282	Assassination
Carus	282-283	Assassination
Numerian	283-284	Possible Assassination
Carinus	283-285	Killed in Battle

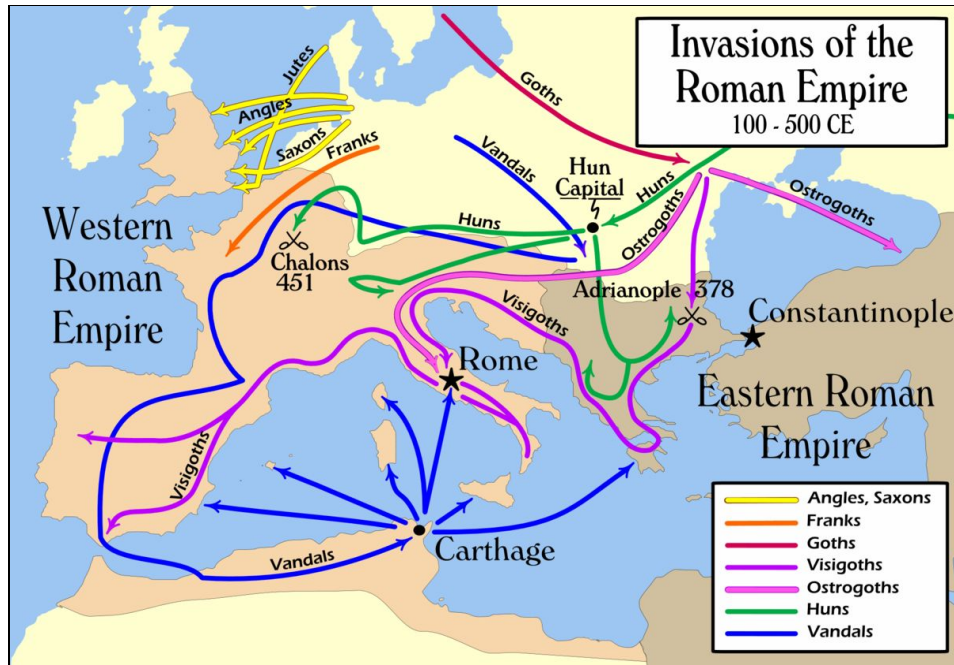
Document C

Roman military expert who wrote what was perhaps the single most influential military treatise in the Western world. His work exercised great influence on European tactics after the Middle Ages.

[Before the year 400 CE] foot soldiers wore breastplates and helmets. But when, because of negligence and laziness, parade ground drills were abandoned, the customary armor began to seem heavy since the soldiers rarely ever wore it. Therefore, they first asked the emperor to set aside the breastplates . . . and then the helmets. So our soldiers fought the Goths without any protection for chest and head and were often beaten by archers. Although there were many disasters, which led to the loss of great cities, no one tried to restore breastplates and helmets to the infantry. Thus it happens that troops in battle, exposed to wounds because they have no armor, think about running and not fighting.”

Source: *Concerning Military Matters* by Vegetius (c. 450 CE)

Document D



Between the 2nd and 6th centuries, the Roman empire was under constant attack from other civilizations. Many of these civilizations, after the collapse of Rome, took control of parts of Europe, Africa, and Asia.

Document E

Herbert J. Muller was an American historian, academic, government official, and author. His book, *Uses of the Past*, focused on Rome, Greece, the spread of Christianity, and the Byzantine empire on the lessons these empires can teach us.

First the economic factor... While the empire was expanding, its prosperity was fed by plundered wealth (stealing from those defeated) and by new markets in the semi-barbaric provinces (areas). When the empire ceased to expand, however, economic progress soon ceased (slowed)....

The abundance of slaves led to the growth of the latifundia (a large farm or plantation), the great estates that ... came to dominate agriculture and ruin the free coloni [farmers], who drifted to the cities, to add to the unemployment there. The abundance of slaves likewise kept wages low.

Source: Herbert J. Muller, *Uses of the Past*, 1967

How could the fall of Rome be a warning for modern civilizations?

Name _____

Document/Sourcing	Questions	
<p>Doc A: Title:</p> <p>Type of Source:</p> <p>Date:</p>	<p>1. Do you agree with the breakdown of the stages provided by Spengler’s ideas? Why or why not?</p> <p>2. If you had to argue what “season” the United States is currently in, what would your argument be? Explain.</p>	
Document/Sourcing	Questions	Reasons for Decline
<p>Doc B: Title:</p> <p>Type of Source:</p> <p>Date:</p>	<p>How many emperors ruled during this time? How many died of natural causes(not being killed through violence)?</p> <p>What does it mean to be assassinated? What does that say about how the country was running?</p> <p>How might the people living inside the empire of Rome view all of these leaders dying violently? Would that be good for Rome?</p>	<p>How does this explain the decline of Rome? Look back at your notes.</p> <p>Which “season” (from Document A) was Rome in according to this document?</p>
<p>Doc C: Title:</p> <p>Type of Source:</p>	<p>What did soldiers wear before 400 BC? Why did they stop wearing them?</p>	<p>How does this explain the decline of Rome? Look back at your notes.</p>

<p>Date:</p>	<p>What happened to the soldiers when they tried to fight the Goths? What did the soldiers do when they got wounded?</p>	<p>Which “season” (from Document A) was Rome in according to this document?</p>
<p>Doc D: Title:</p> <p>Type of Source:</p> <p>Date:</p>	<p>How many different groups invaded Rome during this time? What does that say about the strength of Rome?</p> <p>Which groups reached the city of Rome? What do you think happened to Rome after each time it was invaded?</p>	<p>How does this explain the decline of Rome? Look back at your notes.</p> <p>Which “season” (from Document A) was Rome in according to this document?</p>
<p>Doc E: Title:</p> <p>Type of Source:</p> <p>Date:</p>	<p>How did Rome growing help the economy of the Roman Empire? What happened to the economy after they stopped growing?</p> <p>What did the use of slaves help to grow/create? How did that hurt farmers?</p> <p>How did slaves make life in cities worse?(There are two reasons)</p>	<p>How does this explain the decline of Rome? Look back at your notes.</p> <p>Which “season” (from Document A) was Rome in according to this document?</p>