The Romans in Italy

The Years and Characteristics of First Period in Roman History
• The republic (509-27 BCE)
• Rome grew through military conquest from a small group of cities in the middle of the Italian Peninsula to a state that ruled much of the Mediterranean
• Established a republican form of government in which power was held by the Senate,
  • whose members were primarily wealthy landowners
• Social conflicts/wars of conquest led to political problems
• The republican constitution gave way to rule by a single individual (the emperor)

The Years and Characteristics of Second Period in Roman History
• 27 BCE - 476 CE
• Further expansion
• Enormous building projects
• Cultural flowering but also social upheavals and economic hardship
• Territory was split into eastern and western halves

Magna Graecia
• Colonies established by Greek poles
• Included a number along southern Italy (& Sicily)
• Populated by a variety of different groups that farmed, fished, and traded
  • “Greater Greece”
• Alexander did NOT conquer
• Independent
• Transmitted culture to people who lived farther north in the Italian Peninsula (Etruscans and Romans)

Etruscans
• Built the first cities north of the Magna Graecia
• Developed from people who already lived in north/central Italy - or who spread into this area from unknown locations
• Spoken language was not Indo-European
• Adopted Greek Alphabet
• Wrote letter, records, and literary works → once romans conquered them
• Knowledge of how to read and write Etruscan died out
• Most knowledge about them comes from archaeological evidence
• Established cities that resembled Greek city states and political organizations
• Traded iron for luxury goods
• Built a rich cultural life full of art and music

Geographic Features of Rome
• Located at an easy crossing point on the Tiber River
• Rome stood astride/next to the main avenue of communication between northern and southern Italy
• Seven hills provided safety from attackers and from the floods of the Tiber

Forum
• Originally a cemetery
• Became a public meeting place (similar to the Greek agora)
• (In Rome - obviously)