

OCR A Level Ancient History Transition Booklet

Topics: Julio-Claudian Emperors & The Politics and Society of Sparta (c. 478–404 BC)

Type or write your answers. Use separate paper for Part 1 and Part 2.

Part 1: The Julio-Claudian Emperors (27 BC – AD 68)

This section introduces you to the background of the Roman imperial system and key terminology.

A. Historical Background

After a century of political violence and civil war, Rome was exhausted. Julius Caesar had been declared dictator for life but was assassinated in 44 BC. His adopted heir, Octavian (later Augustus), used a mixture of military power, propaganda, and careful political messaging to become Rome's first emperor in 27 BC—without calling himself king. He claimed to restore the Republic, but in reality, he ruled as an autocrat.

Tasks:

1. Comprehension Questions

Answer in full sentences:

1. What problems did Rome face in the years before Augustus came to power?
2. What does it mean to say Augustus “restored the Republic”?
3. Why might Augustus have avoided calling himself a king?

To help: <https://www.worldhistory.org/Rome/>

2. Source Analysis: Augustus' Res Gestae

“I transferred the Republic from my power to the control of the Senate and Roman people. For this I was named Augustus.” — Res Gestae Divi Augusti

Questions:

- a) What impression does Augustus want to give of his actions?
- b) What might be misleading about this statement?
- c) How could this source be used as propaganda?

B. Key Terms to Define

Tasks:

3. Research and define each key term. Then, write three sentences explaining how Augustus used power without appearing like a king.

Term	Definition
Principate	
Senate	
Princeps	
Imperium	
Res publica	
SPQR	
Praetorian Guard	
Succession	
Imperial cult	
Propaganda	
Autocracy	

C. Timeline Task

Task:

4. Create a timeline of the emperors from Augustus to Nero.

For each, include:

- - Dates of reign
- - One major achievement
- - One major controversy

Part 2: Sparta (c. 478–404 BC)

This section focuses on the geography of Sparta, key terms, and understanding the unique political and social system.

A. Geography Activity

Task:

1. Label the following on a blank map of Ancient Greece:

- Sparta
- Athens
- Peloponnese
- Mount Taygetus
- Eurotas River
- Aegean Sea
- Corinth
- Thermopylae



2. How might Sparta's geography have helped shape its military culture?

3. Why was isolation both a strength and weakness for Sparta?

B. Spartan Key Terms

Task 2: Research and define each key term.

Term	Definition
Spartiates	
Helots	
Perioikoi	
Agoge	
Gerosia	
Ephors	
Apella	
Hoplite	

C. Background. Cleomenes and Demaratus.

This task introduces you to Spartan politics and the rivalry between two kings.

Background: Sparta had two kings from different families. Cleomenes and Demaratus were rivals. According to Herodotus (an historian), Cleomenes bribed the oracle at Delphi to remove Demaratus.

Source (adapted from Herodotus):

"Cleomenes did not like having Demaratus as a co-king. So he bribed the oracle at Delphi to say that Demaratus was not the son of his supposed father, Ariston. As a result, Demaratus was forced to give up the throne."



Task 3:

- a) What does this suggest about the relationship between the two kings?
- b) What does it tell us about power in Sparta?
- c) Research the reliability of Herodotus as a source on Sparta.
- d) Why might someone want to manipulate an oracle?

Final Reflection



Tasks:

Write a short paragraph answering:

- 1. What do I find most interesting so far?
- 2. What am I most nervous about?
- 3. What skills do I want to improve before September?