

THE DECLINE & FALL OF WESTERN ROME

ECONOMIC FACTORS

- Hyperinflation and currency devaluation
- Overtaxation of the middle class
- Disruption of trade routes by raiders
- Reliance on slave labor stifling innovation

MILITARY & EXTERNAL

- Invasions by Germanic tribes (Goths, Vandals)
- Constant pressure from the Huns
- Over-reliance on barbarian mercenaries
- Weakening of the frontier (Limes)

POLITICAL & SOCIAL

- Government instability and corruption
- The Division of the Empire (East vs. West)
- Loss of traditional Roman civic virtue
- Rise of Christianity shifting state loyalty

ENVIRONMENTAL & HEALTH

- The Antonine Plague and population loss
- Soil exhaustion and decreased crop yields
- Lead poisoning in water systems
- Climatic cooling affecting agriculture

Key Milestones

- **285 AD:** Diocletian divides the Empire into East and West.
- **410 AD:** Alaric and the Visigoths sack the city of Rome.

- **455 AD:** The Vandals sack Rome, causing irreparable damage.
- **476 AD:** Odoacer deposes Romulus Augustulus; official end of Western rule.

Educational Reference Template – 476 AD Historical Summary