



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2024 Volume II: Dynamic Earth, Foundation and Fate of Industrial Society

Natural and Human Histories: Using Geology to Study the Roman Past

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In this unit, students will combine the skills and methods of geoscience and history to interpret the life and lands of the Roman Republic and Empire. Students will examine the concepts of plate tectonics, volcanism, river systems, and ore deposits, considering at the same time patterns of settlement of Roman cities, material culture, mining, and the expansion of Empire. Historical concepts are taught in conjunction with geoscience topics, allowing students to use cross-disciplinary approaches to the study of the past. This unit will take students across Europe, from the frontiers of Rio Tinto in Iberia and London in Britannia to the city of Rome itself. Students will consider the geological processes that caused the famous eruption of Vesuvius, which both destroyed the city and preserved its built environment for study by future generations. Students will conclude this unit with a portfolio project that asks them to conduct independent research into the geology and history of a location in the Roman Empire. Students will understand how the earth system shaped history, and how humans shaped the earth system, building connections to the geological and environmental problems of the present day.

(Developed for Read180 grade 8; recommended for World Regional Studies II, grade 7; AP Human Geography, grades 10-12; and Read180, grades 7-12)

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