

# Plan 1.1: What was the Roman Republic?

**Duration:** 50-60 minutes

**Year Group:** Year 13 Classical Civilisation

**Topic:** Politics of the Late Republic

## Learning Intentions

1. Understand how Rome transitioned from monarchy to republic in 509 BC
2. Explore the role of founding myths in shaping Republican identity
3. Analyse the theoretical foundations of shared governance embodied in SPQR

## Resources Needed

- Student worksheets (Lesson 1.1)
- Website access: Topic 1.1 interactive content
- Whiteboard/display for key points
- Optional: Primary source extracts (Livy)

Time	Phase	Activity/Focus
5-7 mins	Starter	Hook Why do countries create founding myths?
12-15 mins	Teaching Phase 1: Monarchy to Republic	Interactive Timeline (Aeneas → Romulus → Kings → Brutus) + Table filling
10-12 mins	Teaching Phase 2 Lucretia Story	Narrative telling + Republican values + The foundational oath
8-10 mins	Teaching Phase 3: SPQR	Interactive SPQR breakdown - each letter's meaning + tensions
10-12 mins	Guided Practice	Exercise 1.1 - Model sources 1-2 together, students do 3-5
5-7 mins	Plenary	Three key takeaways + Exit question: "Why did the Republic eventually fail?"

### Starter (5-7 minutes)

**Hook Question on board:** *"Why do countries create myths about their origins? Think of examples from any nation."*

#### Teacher Notes:

- Let students discuss briefly in pairs first
- Examples they might raise: American founding fathers, British Arthur/Alfred myths, French Revolution stories
- Link to Rome: "Today we'll see how Rome's founding myths shaped their entire political system for 500 years"
- Key point to establish: Myths aren't just stories - they shape political behaviour

### Main Teaching Phase 1: From Monarchy to Republic (12-15 minutes)

#### Interactive Timeline Activity

- Direct students to website Timeline while you narrate key points
- Students fill in worksheet table column 2 (Political Significance) as you discuss each figure

#### Teacher Talking Points:

##### Aeneas (click on timeline together):

- "Notice how Romans didn't claim to BE Trojan - they claimed descent from Troy's survivors"
- "This gave them ancient heritage equal to Greeks, but also showed them as survivors/underdogs"
- **Political Significance to elicit:** Divine ancestry through Venus, ancient legitimate heritage

##### Romulus/Remus:

- "The fratricide is crucial - Rome literally founded on brotherly blood"
- "What might this suggest about Roman civil wars later?"
- "The wolf = divine protection but also savage origins"
- **Political Significance to elicit:** Sacred foundation but warning about civil conflict

##### Seven Kings:

- "Not all bad! Numa = religion, Servius = census/voting"
- "They're kept in the story because they contributed to Roman institutions"
- **Political Significance to elicit:** Each contributed constitutional elements the Republic kept

##### Brutus and 509 BC:

- "Brutus pretended to be stupid (his name means 'stupid') to survive under tyranny"
- "Then revealed his true nature - clever political operator"
- "His descendant would later kill Caesar claiming same justification"
- **Political Significance to elicit:** Model for anti-tyrannical action, justified later violence

**Key Teaching Point:** *"These aren't just bedtime stories - Roman politicians constantly referenced these myths to justify their actions. Caesar claimed descent from Venus, Brutus from Brutus, etc."*

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## Main Teaching Phase 2: The Lucretia Story and Republican Values (10-12 minutes)

**The Narrative** (tell dramatically - this is the Romans' defining moment):

- Set scene: Tarquin the Proud already unpopular, ruling without Senate
- The rape: Son Sextus violates Lucretia (handle sensitively - focus on abuse of power)
- The response: Lucretia's suicide as preservation of honour
- The oath: Brutus pulls knife from her body, swears the foundational oath

**Teacher Notes - Key Points to Emphasise:**

- This is about **abuse of power** - sexual violence as ultimate symbol of tyranny
- Lucretia's suicide = individual sacrifice for collective good (very Roman)
- The oath creates **sacred obligation** - religious dimension to Republican hatred of kings
- Connect to modern: "How do modern states use founding moments of injustice to define themselves?"

**Critical Thinking Moment:** *"Why do you think Romans chose THIS story - with a woman's suffering at its centre - as their founding moment? What does it say about power, gender, and honour in Roman society?"*

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## Main Teaching Phase 3: Understanding SPQR (8-10 minutes)

**Interactive SPQR Breakdown**

- Use website interactive SPQR tool
- Click through each letter while students take notes

**Teacher Emphasis Points:**

**S - Senatus:**

- "About 300 ex-magistrates, lifetime membership"
- "In theory just advisory, in practice ran foreign policy"
- "The experience and continuity in government"

**P - Populus:**

- "NOT everyone - just citizens, and really just those who could get to Rome to vote"
- "But the IDEA that power came from people was revolutionary"
- "Created tension - who speaks for the populus?"

**Q - -que:**

- "AND is important! Not Senate OR People but both together"
- "Built-in tension - what happens when they disagree?"
- "This tension will drive most of Late Republican politics"

**R - Romanus:**

- "Who counts as Roman? This question becomes crucial as Rome expands"
- "Citizenship could be extended - unique in ancient world"

**Key Question to Class:** *"If both Senate AND People have authority, what happens when they disagree? How is this different from a king just deciding?"*

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### Guided Practice: Source Analysis (10-12 minutes)

#### Exercise 1.1 - First Two Sources Together

Do questions 1-2 as a class to model analytical approach:

**Source 1:** "The Roman people were free at last..."

- "What's the key word here?" (FREE)
- "Free from what?" (domination/slavery to one person)
- "So Roman freedom isn't individual liberty - it's collective freedom from one-man rule"

**Source 2:** "SPQR"

- "Where did power lie under kings?" (with the king alone)
- "Where does it lie now?" (shared between Senate and People)
- "What problems might this create?" (disagreement, slow decisions, conflict)

#### Independent Work:

- Students complete sources 3-5 independently or in pairs
  - Circulate and support
  - Share answers for source 5 (ancestry) - link to modern politicians claiming heritage
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### Plenary: The Big Picture (5-7 minutes)

**Three Key Takeaways** (students write these down):

1. **The Republic was ANTI-monarchy:** "Everything designed to prevent one-man rule - but what if the state needs quick decisive action?"
2. **Founding myths mattered:** "These stories were told and retold to justify political actions 500 years later"
3. **Built-in tensions:** "Senate vs People, efficiency vs freedom, order vs liberty - these tensions will destroy the Republic"

**Exit Question:** *"Based on today's lesson, why do you think the Republic eventually failed and Rome got emperors anyway?"*

- Take 2-3 quick responses
  - "We'll explore this over the coming weeks..."
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### Homework

Complete Exercise 1.2 (Analytical Questions) and choose ONE essay from Exercise 1.3 to plan

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## Differentiation

### Support:

- Provide key terms glossary
- Pair weaker students with stronger for source analysis
- Give sentence starters for analytical questions

### Challenge:

- Ask to consider: "How did Augustus later use these Republican myths while destroying the Republic?"
- Extension reading: Livy Book 1.56-60 (the full Lucretia account)
- Consider modern parallels: "How do modern autocrats use democratic language?"

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## Assessment Opportunities

- Table completion shows understanding of political significance
- Source analysis reveals ability to interpret evidence
- Exit question indicates grasp of inherent tensions
- Essay planning (homework) demonstrates analytical thinking