Roman Senate
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Dear Delegates,

Our names are Natasha, and Ayesha and we are your chairs for this conference. We are much like a “novus Homo” to the world of running conferences. We would like to thank you for putting your faith in us. And if you come prepared and in the spirit of Roman honour and glory, we promise you will not be disappointed. As a Senator of the Republic, you will need to be quick witted and knowledgeable about the dynamics of your world. New issues will arise throughout our time together, and success will be reliant on effective decisions made by the whole committee.

My name is Natasha Rowzani and I am one of your co-chairs for the Roman Senate. This is my third year in MUN, and I have attended 9 conferences during my time in high school. I can’t wait to see how each of you use your personal portfolio powers in debate to resolve the issues in Rome!

Hey delegates, My name is Ayesha Chhugani and I am one the other co-chair of this committee. I have done one semester of MUN and been to 1 conference (WAMUNC). I am in 12th grade and am really excited to meet all of you. Roman Senate will be a fast paced committee and I am looking forward to see how you all respond to crises. This should be a fun experience and we hope that you will enjoy your time in the Roman Senate.

We have prepared a background guide which contains information on the various topics you will be debating as the Roman Senate. We have split up the guide into two main topics: internal affairs and external affairs. Within those topics are many subtopics which relate to each issue. Be sure to remember when writing your position paper that you must look at your character’s position and prioritize the topics you want to discuss in your position papers. For example, if you are a military commander, you may want to write about the protecting the borders topic and bring that up in debate. It is up to you to decide what you want to prioritize.

We will be e-mailing all of you with different portfolio powers. please check your E-mail and reply to us diligently.
Guide to the Guide

For your convenience, we have broken the topics that we want you all to discuss into two main topics and several subtopics within that. It is up to you to decide which topics you feel are the most important to discuss. You can get a sense of what topics your character cares about through the position descriptions at the end. I would advise you to decide whether your character wants to focus on internal or external affairs and go from there. Good luck!

How to write a Position Paper

Before coming into debate, you should complete a total of two position papers relating to each major topic: Internal and External Affairs; each will be 1 page. Because there are several subtopics to chose from within the larger topic, you may use the position paper to decide which issue in each topic is the most important to your character and what you would do to resolve that particular issue. You can also speak about what Rome has done in the past and how the empire can change its policies to mitigate the problems. A good position paper will include 3 main paragraphs, we will break each of them down in order to enable you to write the best position paper you are capable of.

**In the first paragraph** you should include what subtopic is the most important within the many major topics. This paragraph should include a rationale and evidence to support why you feel that this particular topic is the most important to the future of the Roman Empire.

**The second paragraph** should include what the Roman Empire has done to combat this issue. This can include previous laws or events that have happened within Rome which impact this issue. You can also include why these plans have failed.

**Your third paragraph** should be the bulk of your position paper and it should include what your character wants to do about this topic. You can use almost anything that will help support your position; this paragraph will help craft the argument you will make in debate and help create your major argument. The length we are looking for is one page single spaced per position paper. Please note that if you want an award or Extra Credit, you must complete two position papers one page in length by May 27 and post them to HMUNC.com!!
Background on Committee:

Salvēte, delegates! It’s 60 BC Rome, at the height of the Roman Empire. And yet, civic harmony seems like a far-fetched dream. Rome is plagued with wars and civil unrest. Violence between battling social classes is everywhere. On the domestic front, a young war hero is slowly rising to power - his name is Julius Caesar. Civil unrest is taking root in Rome as the people begin to question the power and authority of the government. Your job as a member of the Roman Senate will not only be to solve the many issues plaguing Rome but also to figure out how to reestablish the wavering power of the Roman Senate. You will shape history. You will decide how this world will carry on. After all, you are the future of Rome…

FYI: Delegates, please be aware of the time structure. In the BC era, time moving forward corresponds a decrease in in the year, i.e. 100 BC happened before 60 BC. Just please be aware of this as debate moves on, as you don’t want to be that delegate who messes up time.

Structure of Roman Government

Rome in 60 BC is still officially a “Republic.” The governing body of Rome is the Senate, whose decisions are carried out by two Consuls elected annually. For any member of the Senate, being elected Consul is the highest honor as this position holds an enormous amount of power, and it is a prerequisite to become a Censor. The Consuls served as the commanders in chief of the Roman military. To avoid a monarch demonizing Rome, there is limitation of a one-year term for Consul that cannot be on consecutive years.

The senators are made up of the male members of a highly exclusive social class known as the Patricians. There are many ranks below the Senators, including the Equites, primarily composed of merchants and traders who are considered dishonorable and therefore unfit to be Senators by the authorities in power.

The lower classes are represented by the Tribunes who were elected by the plebeian assembly, a lower class counterpart to the Senate. These Tribunes had power within the Senate as well, including veto power over all decisions and over legislation in the plebeian assembly.

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The final rank is the Censor. These individuals are in charge of the census and they keep track of the people in Rome and the property they own. In addition, the censors are also in charge of making sure all Roman people observe proper moral conduct and maintain the order and structure of the Roman society.

**Hierarchy of Roman Society**

Rome was founded upon a strict division between social classes, with aristocrats and military leaders at the top. The general terms used to describe these two types of classes are plebeians and patricians, the former being the farmers and laborers and the latter being the aristocrats and military leaders descended from the founding families of Rome.

The Twelve Tables represented a written law code which applied to all social classes. However, there were rules about crime, property, and family matters that differed between the plebeians and the patricians.

There was also a very substantial slave population living in the Roman Empire.

**Roman Senate Location:** Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus

The Senate in 60 BC was the most important governing body in Rome. At this time there were two groups within the Senate; the **Optimates** (the traditional established order which wanted the Senate to govern) and the **Populares** (led by what the people wanted ex: popular opinion).
Topic One: Internal Affairs

Rome now controls one of the biggest empires ever to have existed. The empire stretches across the entirety of the Mediterranean Sea, making Rome the trading hub of Europe. However, with this much land, how can we, as a Republic, efficiently manage it?

Subtopic One: Managing the Empire; Economic and Social Change

The Roman Mediterranean experienced a boom of economic development and social change as the empire expanded and brought new regions into its network of trade and communication. Agriculture, the economic foundation of the Roman economy, changed radically with this increase in trade.

Farmers are beginning to focus on the production of goods for export, because it is now possible to import grain from other lands for a better price. Other regions in the empire are concentrating on the cultivation of fruits and vegetables, but with this increase in agriculture, the land is starting to tire out. Every year there is less and less food produced. This is making the economy as a whole suffer. With less food being produced, Rome is importing more and more from other areas.

Though the trade in Rome was an equal mix of free-market and state controlled, the government is starting to put more restrictions on trade with other countries. The free-market/state controlled trade ensured that goods made in a small area could be shipped to places far and wide, but with these restrictions goods are not being exported at the rate they were before.

As part of the prestigious Roman Senate, it is your duty to safeguard the Roman economy. Management of arable land in Rome is imperative to our future.
Subtopic Two: Disease Spread by Trade

The Roman Empire uses many routes to get goods from all over the world, including Africa, the Middle East, Northern Europe, and most notably China via the Silk Road. This contact, however, lead to the arrival of diseases not native to Rome. Behçet's disease, the Bubonic Plague, Malaria, and The Antonine Plague are on the rise in the Roman Empire, threatening the overall health of the people.\(^3\)

Malaria is one of the biggest threats, killing off 90% of those who are infected. It is caused by insects (mainly mosquitoes) that travel into Rome with trade goods from Africa. Hundreds are starting to fall ill and you as a Roman Senator need to devise a plan to contain and eliminate this virus from Rome.

The most deadly being the Bubonic Plague. This disease spreads rapidly and leaves no survivors. There is no information on how it is spread but physicians are advising to limit any contact with those that are dying.

The biggest cause of disease in the Roman empire was the lack of sanitation and infrastructure. Although Rome and some of the outlying areas had sewage systems that were praised for their longevity, they were not ideal for preventing disease. Sewers often become clogged and so the people of Rome dump their excrement out the window onto the street. This creates a breeding ground for bacteria and other microbes.\(^4\) Bathing, though is highly encouraged in Rome, is not being done enough and people carrying diseases will contaminate others they come in contact with.\(^5\)

Invaders are a serious threat to the Empire of Rome, but if you ignore the illnesses being carted in during trade, the empire might just start deteriorating from the inside.

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**Subtopic Three: Conquered Peoples**

As mentioned in the previous section, the Roman Empire is vast; the Roman Empire controls all of the Mediterranean Sea. This means that Rome controls people throughout Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. With all these foreigners, it is hard to manage an empire that may lack loyalty to the republic. In the past, this has lead to civil unrest within the empire.

**Slave labor: a source of wealth and a challenge to social order.** Many foreign people are slaves captured in battle and sent back to Rome to be sold. Slaves are bought for life and their children often inherit the bonds of slavery. A quarter of the Roman empire’s population is made up of slaves and Rome’s economy depends upon them to work fields and assist craftsmen. Slaves can range from skilled teachers, accountants and physicians to unskilled laborers working in farms and mines. However, the common “bound to the ground” did not apply to all the slaves living in Rome. Farmers and other laborers were allowed to own land which, despite belonging to their masters, they could use as their own. Skilled slaves, many of which were Greek, were allowed to earn wages for their work. Further, many slaves were allowed to obtain their own freedom through their work, gaining them admission into the social class *libertus*.

However, this does not mean that freed slaves have the same rights as other citizens of the empire. The term *libertus* most nearly means “freed slave.” Slaves were not allowed to hold public office or state priesthoods or even achieve a senatorial rank. Rebellions led by slaves have already led to several wars in the empire as well as large amounts of civil unrest, and have been put down at the expense of the lives of many Roman soldiers. If the slaves as a whole were to rise up against our people, the result would surely be catastrophic. The most recent example of one of these uprisings was the Third Servile War, the finale of three unsuccessful slave uprisings.

Therefore, you as the Roman Senate must create a way to bring these people into the empire in a manner that will preserve their loyalty to us and keep them loyal for generations to come. So as well as keeping these peoples loyal, a plan of action on how to combat a possible future uprising is necessary.

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Subtopic Four: Senate Image/Corruption

Currently, the Roman Senate does not have a very good image in the eyes of the people of Rome. The Roman people are starting to devalue the idea of the republic. The future of our oligarchy is currently at stake.

The Roman Senate is slowly starting to lose its influence within Rome. The people of Rome look at The Senate and see a group of rich men making decisions with only their own interests in mind. Furthermore, there have been dozens of allegations of corruption. This has lead to many Roman citizens to start searching for a new form of government that will serve them better.

You must decide how the Senate will change this view. The citizens of Rome have to learn that the Senate is acting in the best interest of the people. How you as a Senate will do this, however, is up to you. Because if you don’t, there won’t be a Republic to represent anymore.

Subtopic Five: Social Classes Struggle for Power

There has been a struggle for power in Rome between the various social groups - most prominently between the plebeians and the patricians.

The Conflict of the Orders began in 494 BCE, where the plebeians fought to gain social equality. This struggle officially ended with the creation of the twelve tables which outlined the laws of the patricians and plebeians, but this struggle has continued to this day, as it is very hard for the Senate to enforce the laws. This battle between the “haves” and the “have nots” is one that has plagued societies in the past, and must be solved if the Roman Republic wishes to continue as the most successful empire.

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In the Roman Empire, there are very strict and defined social classes that kept the rich very separated from the poor. These social boundaries are very visible and have largely been enforced by the government. For example, slaves and working men may interact together, but working men and nobles were hardly allowed to be seen together in a formal situation. Another example is the mistreatment of the working class; they were not allowed to gain status, or hold any religious office. This sends a clear statement to the plebeians that there really is nothing for them outside of farming. During the founding of the Republic, the patricians conspired to gain a monopoly of power that included the consulship, the Senate, and all religious offices. This strained relations between social classes because the plebeians had nothing except the right to vote in the assemblies. The plebeians are trying to gain rights through political agitation and physical confrontation, going as far as to kill patricians to send a sign to the Senate. There have been several confrontations in the Roman capital. Beheadings of the patricians have occurred, and the heads of several noblemen are mounted on spikes outside of government buildings.

The rise of Patrician Julius Caesar is the most troubling to the empire. Because of his clear altruism towards the lower classes, Caesar has gained an immense amount of leverage in the Roman Republic. As a result, not only is the power of the senate threatened but also the future of democracy is threatened, as the idea of an emperor ruling Rome is becoming more and more real. Caesar’s rise marks an unprecedented series of events in which the power of the senate is beginning to dwindle as the power of totalitarian rule is increasing.

Your job as the Roman Senate is to settle this dispute, prevent more violent social unrest, and to give the plebeians what they want without creating more conflict with the patricians. If this problem isn’t resolved quickly more and more of your citizens will fall victim to the class-related violence that is currently plaguing Rome. Create a plan and form new laws, as a lack of action could cause these two groups to plunge Rome into another civil war. We must stop Caesar before all of Rome is gone.

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Questions to Consider

1. What should the Senate do to change its image in the eyes of the Roman people?
2. How do you appease the plebeians without completely destroying the social structure of Rome? Should they be allowed in the Senate?
3. How will the Senate ensure the loyalty of conquered peoples (slaves)?
4. How will you increase the production of food in Rome (keep in mind over farming is already an issue)?
Topic Two: External Affairs

Subtopic One: Protecting the Borders—Understanding the Invaders

As Rome is becoming more powerful and as our population is increasing at an exponential rate, the need to expand the empire has never been so great. In order to secure Rome’s power, it must occupy more land. However, expanding an empire is not that easy—pirates, rebellious barbarians, and defending Rome’s borders stand in the way of our empire’s potential success. How will the Senate overcome these challenges?

The Northern Borderlands:

About 40 years ago, a new threat moved into the Roman Empire. Barbaric Germanic tribes known as Marcomanni, Alamanni, Franks, Angles, and the Saxons entered into Roman territory and have been wreaking havoc on the Northern border. The areas around the border are now under constant assault. This area is especially important to Rome because the lands are rich and can be used for farming and trade. These tribes are killing Roman citizens (when they make it through the border) and wreaking havoc. The Roman Senate needs to decide how the area will be managed in terms of military strength, and in terms of economic zones. Because people farther away from the heart of Rome are easily impressionable, it is important that the Senate not only acts in the best interest of the Empire, but also in the best interest of the people living around the border.

African Area:

After the Third Punic War against Carthage, Africa Proconsularis (the Roman colony in Africa) was established by the Republic of Rome. Governed by a proconsul (a governor appointed by the Senate), Africa Proconsularis is in the most fertile part of what was formerly Carthaginian territory. In 118 BC, the Numidian prince, Jugurtha, attempted to reunify the smaller kingdoms of Africa under his rule. Jugurtha once called the empire of Rome "urbe venalem et mature perituram, si emptorem invenirei" ("a city for sale… doomed to quick destruction, if it should find a buyer").

While Roman troops were engaged in the Cimbrian War, Jugurtha’s troops massacred citizens of Cirta, the capital of the Berber Kingdom in Northern Africa causing a great conflict within Africa to erupt. This rebellion by the peoples of Africa demonstrates the lack of loyalty the Africans have towards the Roman Empire.13

The Senate must devise a solution to help maintain the loyalty of the people of Africa. Many of these Africans want a say in their Roman government, some even wanting to be self-governed. This balance between power of the empire and power of these African areas must be established to ensure stability in these areas. An empire is as strong as its weakest link, and so it is important that the people of Africa be fully reunited to Rome.

Subtopic One- Defeating the Invaders

The borders of Rome are constantly being attacked by outside forces who wish to see Rome destroyed. As senators, it is your job to make sure they do not succeed.

Rome, however, does not have the men or the resources to defend our extensive border. The hiring of men from local tribes outside of the Roman border (mercenaries) is providing more able-bodied warriors who serve within the Roman army. But, in order to ensure this loyalty, Rome uses trade, military honors, and sometimes even pitting various tribes against each other in an attempt to keep control of these soldiers for hire.

Despite these efforts, hostility is rising amongst the tribes. They are starting to resent

Roman influence within their tribes and feel that, because Rome is stealing all able-bodied men from their own tribes, they are left unprotected. Tribal chieftains, in order to combat Roman influence, have started adopting the practice of mandatory military service. Rumors of anarchy among the foreign Roman soldiers are rising.\(^\text{14}\)

It is your job to deal with this situation. How will you stop these local tribal men from attacking your people? Rome does not have enough men to defend its borders, so what will you do to resolve this issue?

**Subtopic Two: Trade, Bandits, and Pirates, Oh My!**

Specialized production of agricultural goods and manufactured goods set the stage for vigorous trade. Sea lanes linked ports from Syria and Palestine to Spain and northern Africa, so that sizable cargo could move safely over long distances.\(^\text{15}\) Any problems with trade will result in catastrophic losses for Rome.

One of these problems is the growing piracy problem in Rome. Traders and merchants are being attacked by bandits on their way to and from their destinations. Merchant ships are being taken over by pirates. The pirate problem is so bad that land and sea trade has nearly come to a standstill, and Rome is suffering.\(^\text{16}\) Farmers are not getting paid for their goods, and this is making the people of this glorious empire starve. Bandits have been raiding merchants as they travel throughout Asia and Africa. These raiders are causing such a problem that other empires are starting to think of stopping trade with Rome permanently. If this were to happen the Empire will surely crumble from lack of funds.

For the last decade, pirates have been gaining a remarkable foothold in the Mediterranean. The rise of piracy began after the Third Punic War and the fall of Carthage in 146 B.C. The powerful fleet of the North African kingdom was destroyed, and Rome did not actively protect its new provinces.


http://www.ancient.eu/article/47/
Since the Punic Wars, the Roman navy has had no threats and has been waning in importance for the projection of Roman power. In the vacuum, pirates have created strongholds in both Crete and Cilicia, and many other smaller havens. From these strongholds they have terrorized the shipping lanes of the Mediterranean. Rhodes, a notable ally of Rome has been crippled by interference in their maritime trade. And cities unable to hold off the strength of the pirates have become harbors for them, or have been forced to make alliances with the pirates.\textsuperscript{17}

This situation has increased the strength and spread of piracy in the eastern Mediterranean to a degree that demands the attention of the Senate. What was once a nuisance has become a tangible threat to the economy and stability of Rome. Merchants who fear piracy not only fear for the loss of their goods, but for their very lives — if they aren’t killed in the plundering of their ships, the pirates are almost certain to sell them into slavery. The true profit of piracy has come from the slave trade. And most disgusting is the fact that Romans have been buying slaves from the very pirates that terrorize our seas without a second thought.

As senators you will have to decide on a plan of action that will neutralize the threats to your Empire. Determine if your military will get involved and how they will “attack” this problem. Further, how will you deal with other Empires threatening to cut Rome out of trade? When dealing with other Empires, you must remember that Rome has a far superior military and population than most other Empires. Will you resort to force on both sides of this issue or will diplomacy be the reckoning force while dealing with your opposition?

Questions to consider:

1. What should the Senate do to combat invasions from barbaric tribes in the Middle East?
2. What actions should be taken in order to resolve tensions with countries such as Iberia, regions in Africa, and Italy?
3. What amount of the military should be delegated to protecting the border? Where will the funding for the increased military come from?
4. How will you protect vital trade from piracy?

Position Descriptions

Gnaeus Pompeius (Pompey)

In 60 BC, Pompey is in a difficult position with the Senate. He is 46 years old, comes from a wealthy Italian equestrian background, and his father is the first to establish the family among the Roman nobility. Pompey is extremely ambitious and maintains a very good reputation as both a general and politician in Rome. In 62 BC, as a general, he returned from fighting King Mithridates in the East. Due to his immense popularity with the Roman people, he is regarded with suspicion by the Optimates.\(^\text{18}\) (later opposes Julius Caesar which leads to civil war in Rome)

Marcus Tullius Cicero

A brilliant lawyer and the first of his family to achieve Roman office, Cicero is one of the leading political figures in the Roman Senate. One of his most important aspects is his ability to manipulate the law to his advantage and influence the people of Rome. He is a very influential philosopher and can bring the people of Rome onto his side very easily.\(^\text{19}\)

Marc Antony- A Roman politician and military general that plays a critical role in the transformation of the Rome into a republic, Anthony was appointed by Caesar the administrator of Italy. As a friend to Caesar, Antony has more political say and power within the government.\(^\text{20}\)

Marcus Caelius Rufus-Born into a wealthy equestrian family, Rufus is a very famous orator and politician in the Roman Republic. A natural born speaker and writer, Rufus is very influential in the Roman Senate as a man who represents the patricians and the power of the Roman Senate.\(^\text{21}\)

Marcus Junius Brutus the Younger- Brutus’s political career started promptly when he became an assistant to Cato, during his governorship of Cyprus. Brutus’s senate career started when Caesar himself Brutus to serve as urban praetor


for the following year. Brutus won the nomination and started his work in the Roman Senate under Caesar.\textsuperscript{22}

**Marcus Licinius Crassus**

A Roman general and politician, Crassus is a very influential leader representing the patricians and believes very strongly in the power of the senate. Crassus is among one of the wealthiest men in Rome at this time and he serves as Julius Caesar’s financial patron.\textsuperscript{23}

**Publius Clodius Pulcher**

Although Caesar is viewed as a prodigy by many Romans as the man of the people, Pulcher is arguably the true senator for the people. Best known for his popularist tactics, Pulcher fought for a very ambitious plan and gained the support of many people in Rome as a result.\textsuperscript{24}

**Cato the Younger**

Cato the Younger was a politician and statesman in the late Roman Republic and a follower of the Stoic philosophy. A noted orator, he is best known for his stubbornness and tenacity as well as his immunity to bribes, his moral integrity, and his famous distaste for the ubiquitous corruption of the period.\textsuperscript{25}

**Marcus Aemilius Lepidus**

Often regarded as the weakest member of the triumvirate, Marcus Aemilius Lepidus is still a very influential senator nonetheless. He is also a very close ally with Julius Caesar. He started his career as an overseer of the Roman mint and was soon appointed as a praetor, or a commander of the army.\textsuperscript{26}

**Decimus Junius Brutus Albinus**

Brutus was a distant cousin of Caesar, and on many occasions Caesar expressed how he liked Brutus as a son. Brutus served during the Gallic Wars as the commander of a fleet and still maintains power over that fleet today.\textsuperscript{27}


\textsuperscript{27} "Decimus Junius Brutus Albinus (d.43 BC)." Decimus Junius Brutus Albinus (d.43 BC). N.p., n.d. Web. 01 May 2015.
**Gaius Cassius Longinus**

Longinus studied philosophy under Archelaus and became fluent in Greek. He became the commander of a fleet in Sicily after he returned to Rome and although he has shown loyalty to Caesar in the past, his loyalty is starting to crumble. He has started to view Caesar as a dictator and wants to bring Rome back to the powerful democracy it once was.28

**Gaius Scribonius Curio**

Known as a distinguished orator, Curio was a friend of Caesar, Pompey, Marc Antony and Cicero. He built one of Rome’s first amphitheaters and later acted as a praetor (commander of an army), but he is often known for his calls of peace in the face of war.29

**Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa**

One of Rome’s most brilliant architects and generals, Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa was a very influential senator in Rome. He is a war hero in the battles against Egypt and is renowned for his construction of much of Rome’s infrastructure. He has been known to have very controversial opinions of the Senate, stating that the senate was often weak in its ability to get legislation done and that there was too much corruption in the Senate to get things done.30

**Gaius Antistius Vetus**

A senator who came from a plebeian household and served as a consul, Vetus often speaks about how little the senate was doing in the face of so many problems. While many senators do feel that he is a supporter of Caesar, he really only wants to fight for a stable government.31

**Pontius Aquila**

A senator who directly represented the plebeians, Aquila was given the title tribune of the plebs in which he was able to gather meetings with the plebeians. Although Caesar was often known as the “man of people,” Aqilla strongly

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