

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**High School History Reading Comprehension**  
Read the text below and answer the questions by choosing the true option!

## **The Fall of the Roman Empire**

The Roman Empire, one of the most influential civilizations in history, spanned over a thousand years, leaving a legacy that shaped modern law, politics, and culture. Its decline, often dated to the year 476 CE, marked the end of classical antiquity and the beginning of the Middle Ages. However, the reasons behind its fall remain debated among historians.

Several key factors contributed to the empire's decline. Political instability plagued Rome in its later years. Emperors often rose to power through violence or bribery, leading to short-lived reigns and a lack of strong leadership. At the same time, economic struggles undermined the empire's ability to sustain itself. Heavy taxation, reliance on slave labor, and rampant inflation weakened the Roman economy.

Additionally, external pressures played a critical role. Barbarian invasions, including those by the Visigoths and Vandals, chipped away at Roman territories. In 410 CE, the Visigoths sacked Rome, a shocking event highlighting the empire's vulnerability. Meanwhile, internal divisions such as the splitting of the empire into eastern and western halves further fragmented its unity.

Despite its fall, the Roman Empire's influence endured. The Byzantine Empire, centered in Constantinople, preserved much Roman culture and governance for nearly a thousand years. In Western Europe, Roman law, language, and infrastructure continued to shape emerging medieval societies.

The decline of the Roman Empire serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of overexpansion, economic mismanagement, and political corruption. Understanding its fall helps us grasp the complexities of sustaining a great civilization.

### **QUESTIONS**

1. What year is commonly associated with the fall of the Western Roman Empire?
  - A) 410 CE
  - B) 476 CE
  - C) 1453 CE
  - D) 1000 CE
2. What happened to Roman culture after the fall of the Western Roman Empire?
  - A) It was entirely lost and forgotten.
  - B) It was preserved by the Byzantine Empire and influenced Western Europe.
  - C) It was replaced by barbarian traditions.
  - D) It became the foundation of the Islamic Caliphate.
3. Which of the following was NOT a factor in the fall of the Roman Empire?
  - A) Heavy taxation
  - B) Barbarian invasions
  - C) Strong and stable leadership
  - D) Economic struggles
4. How did political instability contribute to Rome's decline?
  - A) It created a stable system of governance.
  - B) It resulted in frequent leadership changes and weak emperors.
  - C) It encouraged unity among the provinces.
  - D) It led to stronger alliances with neighboring tribes.