

# Ancient Rome – Wars and Battles

The Ancient Romans fought many battles and wars in order to expand and protect their empire. There were also civil wars where Romans fought Romans in order to gain power. Here are some of the major battles and wars that the Romans fought.

## The Punic Wars

The Punic Wars were fought between Rome and [Carthage](#) from 264 BC to 146 BC. Carthage was a large City located on the coast of North Africa. This sounds like a long way away at first, but Carthage was just a short sea voyage from Rome across the Mediterranean Sea. Both cities were major powers at the time and both were expanding their empires. As the empires grew, they began to clash and soon war had begun.

There were three major parts of the Punic wars and they were fought over the course of more than 100 years,

- **First Punic War (264 - 241 BC):** The First Punic War was fought largely over the island of Sicily. This meant a lot of the fighting was at sea where Carthage had the advantage of a much stronger navy than Rome. However, Rome quickly built up a large navy of over 100 ships. Rome also invented the corvus, a type of assault bridge that allowed Rome's superior soldiers to board enemy navy vessels. Rome soon dominated Carthage and won the war.
- **Second Punic War (218 - 201 BC):** In the Second Punic War, Carthage had more success fighting against the Roman legions. The Carthage leader and general, [Hannibal](#), made a daring crossing of the Alps to attack Rome and northern Italy. This crossing was made more famous because he also brought a large number of elephants with him. Hannibal was a brilliant general and won several battles against the Romans. However, despite fighting for 16 years, Hannibal wasn't able to conquer the city of Rome. When Rome counterattacked his homeland of Carthage, Hannibal was forced to retreat. The final battle in this war was the Battle of Zama where the Roman general Scipio Africanus defeated Hannibal.
- **Third Punic War (149 - 146 BC):** In the Third Punic War Rome attacked the city of Carthage. After three years of laying siege to the city, the Roman army broke through the walls and burned it to the ground.

## **The Battle of Cynoscephalae (364 BC)**

In this battle the Roman Legion under Titus Flamininus soundly defeated the Macedonian Army led by Philip V. This battle was important because the successors of Greek leader [Alexander the Great](#) had now been defeated. Rome had become the dominant world power.

## **Third Servile War (73 - 71 BC)**

This war started when 78 gladiators, including their leader Spartacus, escaped and started a rebellion. Soon they had over 120,000 escaped slaves and others traveling with them invading the countryside. They successfully fought back many Roman soldiers until finally an army with a full 8 legions was dispatched to destroy them. The fighting was long and bitter, but eventually Spartacus' army was defeated.

## **Caesar's Civil War (49 - 45 BC)**

This war is also called the Great Roman Civil War. Julius Caesar's legions fought against the Senate supported legions of Pompey the Great. The war lasted for four years until Caesar finally defeated Pompey and became Dictator of Rome. This signaled the end of the Roman Republic.

The famous moment in this war was when Caesar crossed the Rubicon River. This meant he was going to war against Rome. Today the term "crossing the Rubicon" is still used to say that someone had reached the point of no return and can not go back.

## **The Battle of Actium (31 BC)**

In this battle Octavian's forces, led by Marcus Agrippa, defeated the combined forces of Roman general Marc Antony and [Egyptian Pharaoh](#) Cleopatra VII. As a result Octavian became the sole power in Rome and would soon become Rome's first Emperor. He would change his name to Augustus when he became emperor.

# Ancient Rome – Wars and Battles Quiz

1) What major city did Rome fight against in the Punic Wars?

- Alexandria
  - Sparta
  - Athens
  - Carthage
  - Tripoli
- 

2) In what war did Hannibal cross the Alps and attack northern Italy?

- The Second Punic War
  - The Macedonian War
  - The Roman Civil War
  - The First Punic War
  - The Servile War
- 

3) Who was the leader of the rebelling gladiators and slaves in the Third Servile War?

- Hannibal
  - Julius Caesar
  - Marcus Agrippa
  - Spartacus
  - Pompey
- 

4) What was the result of the Battle of Actium?

- Rome became the dominant world power after defeating Macedonia
  - Hannibal was finally defeated by the Roman legions
  - The forces of Octavian defeated Marc Antony and Octavian became Emperor of Rome
  - The city of Carthage was ransacked and burned to the ground
  - The slaves who revolted against Rome were defeated
- 

5) What Roman general did Julius Caesar defeat in the Roman Civil War?

- Scipio Africanus
  - Pompey the Great
  - Marcus Agrippa
  - Gaius Marius
  - Marc Antony
-

6) What did it mean when Julius Caesar and his army crossed the Rubicon River?

It meant that he was surrendering his forces to Rome

It meant that he was going to burn Rome to the ground

It meant that he had finally defeated Hannibal and the Carthage army

It meant that he had achieved victory and was coming home in peace

It meant that he was attacking the city of Rome and there was no turning back

---

7) What was the significance of Julius Caesar winning the Roman civil war?

It signaled the end of the Roman Republic

It made Rome a dominant world power

It meant that Caesar would be the first Emperor of Rome

It was the last of the slave revolts

It was the end of the city of Carthage

---

8) What large animal did Hannibal bring with him when he crossed the Alps?

Giraffe

Hippo

Elephant

Polar bear

Rhino

---

9) For what war did Rome build up a navy of over 100 warships in order to defeat Carthage?

The First Punic War

The Second Punic War

The Third Punic War

The Battle of Actium

The Macedonian War

---

10) Who did Marc Antony ally with in his fight against Octavian?

Philip V of Macedon

Hannibal of Carthage

Marcus Agrippa of Rome

Egyptian Pharaoh Cleopatra VII

Pompey the Great