## Preparation

* Download “World’s Collide: Persians and Greeks”
* Download “The Macedonian Empire”
* Download “The Ptolemaic Dynasty”
* Download “The Mauryan and Gupta Empires”
* Download “The Zhou and Qin Empires”

## Purpose

In this lesson, you’re introduced to a variety of empires. In this activity, you’ll analyze various characteristics that made each of these empires a success. By doing so, you’ll begin to understand the ways in which certain empires were successful as well as the qualities that might have led to their failure. In addition, you’ll be able to use these skills to analyze modern governments and possibilities for future collapses.

## Practices

### Reading, comparison, causation, claim testing

In this activity, you’ll have to use your close-reading skills to pull out information from the associated articles to complete the activity. You’ll also have to compare the empires and decide which elements of each empire were the best, and in doing so will get to create your own Frankenstein-type empire. In addition, you’ll have to use causation skills to decide if the combination of elements you’ve chosen will lead to the empire declining or falling. Finally, claim testing will be required as you determine how to create the best type of empire using evidence and logic.

## Process

1. Your teacher will either hand out or have you download the Empire Building worksheet and each of the articles listed above.
2. You’ll work in small groups of three or four on one of the following categories your teacher will assign your group: political structure, economic systems, military strength, social hierarchy, and main weakness.
3. Each member of your group will then review the article set to pull out information about each empire for your group’s assigned category and fill in the appropriate row of the worksheet table.
4. Once each group has completed the worksheet for their assigned category, your teacher will put you into new groups. Your new group will have an expert in each of the different categories (remember, you’re now the expert for the category you were assigned in the last part of this activity).
5. Each category expert will share their information with the rest of the group and together you’ll complete all the rows of the chart.
6. Work with your new group members to decide which elements to include in your new, Frankenstein-style empire. Your goal is to create the best, most successful, or most indestructible empire, but you can only use the “best” parts of the historical empires for three of the categories. The other two categories must be constructed based on what your group decides are the second or third best. Your group will now have at least one weakness. The trick is to pick the weakness or weaknesses you can most easily defend when you present your empire to the class. You will have to justify your selections with evidence from the articles you read earlier.
7. Use butcher paper or your computer to create your group’s Frankenstein empire. Your Frankenstein should include an image and a name to represent your newly created empire with labels and descriptions for each of the categories, explaining your choices for why these selections make the “best” empire.
8. Each group will present their Frankenstein empire to the class. As each group presents, take brief notes on any weaknesses you see in each empire.
9. Have a class discussion about the similarities between all of the Frankenstein empires. Think about why most groups included these elements in their empires.
10. Finally, you’ll individually answer the following prompt at the end of the worksheet: *What is the most important quality that made these empires successful and what was the most significant weakness that led to the collapse of empires?* Make sure you use evidence from the activity in your answers.
11. Your teacher will collect these answers to assess how well you understood the success and failure of empires in this unit.

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| Name: |  | Date: |  |

**Directions:**

1. Once you and your group have read this activity’s articles, use the information you now have about each empire to complete the row for your assigned category in the table below. Note that the Roman Empire has been used as an example in the second column. (You’ll read this article in the next lesson.)
2. After you’ve completed your row of the worksheet, you’ll get into new groups and be the “expert” for your assigned category. With your new group, assemble your Frankenstein empire and prepare to present it to the class.
3. When your class has finished your presentations, answer the prompt at the end of this worksheet.

| Categories | EXAMPLE:Roman Empire | Persians & Greeks | Macedonian Empire | Ptolemaic Dynasty | Mauryan & Gupta | Zhou & Qin |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Political structure | In 27 BCE, Augustus became the first official emperor of Rome; however, Rome was an empire for much longer than this. The period from 27 BCE to 180 CE was known as the Pax Romana (Roman Peace), a time of stability, with emperors seizing more and more power. While traditions of the former Roman Republic were kept, in actuality the emperors were more like dictators. Strong, organized system of administration to control an empire over 2 million square miles. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Economic system | Most of those living in the Roman Empire were farmers and everyone had to pay taxes to the government. Trade was extremely important to the success of Roman economic systems, as the Roman Empire covered lots of territory and included many different networks of exchange. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Military strength | Military service was essential to the stability of the expanding empire. It was also a way for men to obtain more wealth and political power. Roman roads linked the cities, which allowed for expanded trade, troop movements, and faster communication. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Social hierarchy | Of the 45 million people living under Roman rule, only 4 million were citizens and about 1/3 of those living on the Italian peninsula alone were slaves. The normal hierarchical distinctions between wealthy and commoner existed throughout Rome. The empire was also a patriarchal one, with many regulations restricting women’s movements and rights. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Main weakness | A number of factors led to this empire’s demise: poor economy, diseases that traveled across networks, outside (Germanic invasions), splitting the empire in two, reliance on non- Romans to join the military, and the decline of the city of Rome due to better networks and connections in the east (Constantinople). |  |  |  |  |  |

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| What is the most important quality that made these empires successful and what was the most significant weakness that led to the collapse of empires? |
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