

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

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

### The Patricians and the Plebeians

The Etruscans were a brutal civilization from the northern part of the Italian peninsula. The Etruscans conquered most of Rome and, for more than a century, rained terror on the Roman people. The patricians were the most prosperous families of Rome. In 509BC, a group of patricians expelled the Etruscan king and decreed that Rome would be a republic. A republic is a form of government with elected officials. The patricians elected senators to serve their interests. Senate is derived from a term meaning elder, because the Roman Senate consisted of the oldest and wisest of the patricians. The senate selected two people to rule together in place of the Etruscan king. The new patrician rulers were known as consuls.

The plebeians were the merchants, farmers, and craft workers of Rome. In 491BC, Romans were at war, but the plebeians refused to fight for their city unless they were given the right to elect their own leaders. The plebeians elected tribunes, who represented the plebeians against any mistreatment by the consuls or the Senate.

The senate met in the Forum, a marketplace in the valley among the hills that surround Rome. The senators

would rule on military and foreign affairs, but the tribunes attended the meetings in order to protect the rights of the plebeians. When a tribune objected to a law, he would shout “veto.” Veto means “I forbid” in Latin. Latin was the language of the Romans. If enough tribunes objected, they could stop the law from passing.

The Roman government was considered bicameral because it had two “houses.” The upper house consisted of the patricians in the senate, while the lower house was composed of plebeian tribunes.

The Constitution of the United States organized the American Congress with two houses: the Senate and the House of Representatives. Two senators represent each state. The senate advises the president and confirms his appointments. The number of congressmen in the House of Representatives is determined by the population of a state. Every ten years the United States government tries to get an accurate population count. Each state has at least one of the 435 seats in the House of Representatives. Florida has twenty-five seats in the House of Representatives, but that number rose after the 2010 census.

### Answer in complete sentences

*Please write in complete sentences.*

\*3. Use a dictionary to define “*patri-*,” the root of patrician. List at least two words with this root.

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\*4. Why is the United States a republic?

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\*5. What can you compare the Forum to in modern society? Explain your reasoning.

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\*6. Explain what a veto was in ancient Rome?

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\*7. Suggest a class rule that most students would agree to, but would be vetoed by the teacher.

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\*This is a higher order learning question. You will earn credit for any reasonable answer.