

Biography of Augustus

- **Occupation:** Emperor of Rome
- **Born:** September 23, 63 BC in Rome, Italy
- **Died:** August 19, AD 14 in Nola, Italy
- **Best known for:** The first Roman Emperor and establishing the Roman Empire
- **Reign:** 27 BC to 14 AD

Childhood

Augustus was born on September 23, 63 BC in the city of Rome. At the time, Rome was still a republic governed by elected officials. His birth name was Gaius Octavius Thurinus, but he was usually called Octavian until later in life. His father, also called Gaius Octavius, was the governor of Macedonia. His mother came from a famous family and was the niece of [Julius Caesar](#).

Octavian grew up in the village of Velletri, not too far from Rome. His father died when he was just four years old. His mother remarried, but Octavian was sent to be raised by his grandmother Julia Caesaris, Julius Caesar's sister.

Early Career

Once Octavian became a man, he began to get involved in the politics of Rome. Soon he wished to join his Uncle Caesar in battle. After a few false starts, he was able to join Caesar. Caesar was impressed with the young man and, as he had no son of his own, made Octavian the heir to his fortune and name.

Julius Caesar is Killed

Upon defeating Pompey the Great, Caesar became dictator of Rome. Many people worried that this would be the end of the

Roman Republic. On March 15, 44 BC, Julius Caesar was assassinated.

Octavian was away from Rome when Caesar was killed, but he immediately returned upon hearing the news. He found out that he had been adopted by Caesar as his heir. Octavian began to gather political support in the Roman Senate as well as military support in the form of Caesar's legions. He soon was a formidable power in the city and was elected to the position of consul.

The Second Triumvirate

At the same time, others were trying to fill the void of power left by Caesar's death. Marc Antony, a famous general and relative of Caesar, thought he should be dictator. He clashed with Octavian until they agreed to a truce. Together with a third powerful Roman named Lepidus, Octavian and Marc Antony formed the Second Triumvirate. This was an alliance where the three men shared supreme power in Rome.

Battles

Eventually, the Triumvirate began to battle each other for power. In many of these battles, Octavian's friend and general, Marcus Agrippa, led his troops into battle. First Lepidus was defeated and his troops came over to the side of Octavian. Marc Antony allied himself with [Queen Cleopatra of Egypt](#). At the Battle of Actium, Octavian's troops defeated Antony and Cleopatra's armies. Upon their defeat, Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide.

Ruler of Rome

With Marc Antony dead Octavian was the most powerful man in Rome. In 27 BC the Senate gave him the title of Augustus and he would be known by this name for the rest of his life. He became the ruler and emperor of Rome. The basic government

of the republic, such as the Senate and other officials, was still in place, but the emperor had the ultimate power.

A Good Leader

When Augustus became emperor, Rome had experienced many years of civil war. He brought peace to the land and began to rebuild much of the city and the empire. He built many roads, buildings, bridges, and government buildings. He also strengthened the army and conquered much of the land around the Mediterranean Sea. Under Augustus' rule, Rome once again experienced peace and prosperity.

The next 200 years were years of peace for the Roman Empire. This period is often called the Pax Romana, which means "peace of Rome". Augustus is often given credit for establishing the infrastructure that led to such a long period of peace.

Death

Augustus ruled up until his death in 14 AD. His step-son, Tiberius, became the second emperor of Rome.

Interesting Facts about Caesar Augustus

- Augustus did not call himself king, but used the title *Princeps Civitatis*, which meant "First Citizen".
- He established a standing army for Rome where the soldiers were volunteers who served for a term of 20 years. This was different from the early temporary armies made up of Roman citizens.
- The month of [August](#) is named after Augustus. Prior to this the month was called *Sextilis*.
- Augustus rebuilt much of the city of Rome. He said on his deathbed that "I found a Rome of bricks; I leave to you one of marble".
- He established a permanent fire-fighting and police force for the city of Rome.

