Introduction to the Byzantine Empire
Do Now: What are the advantages of building a major city here?
Advantages

Peninsula

- Provided natural safe harbors for ships
  - both merchant and military ships
- Provided natural defense
  - water on three sides. (the Black and Aegean Seas)
Advantages

Trade

- Easy access to the Mediterranean Sea
- Located at an important land route that linked Europe and Asia (Silk Road)
The founding of Constantinople & the Byzantine Empire

Since the Rule of Diocletian (in the late 200s A.D.), the Roman Empire was divided in two – Western and Eastern Empires.

The Western half was being weakened by constant attacking Germanic invaders.

In 330 A.D. Emperor Constantine decided to relocate the capital to the Eastern half of the Empire.
Constantinople

City was heavily fortified
- Water on three side plus a wall was built to protect the fourth side.

Multi-ethnic city
- Greeks, Persians, Italians, Turks, Slavs, Armenians, and Jews lived in the city

The citizens spoke Greek, but Latin was the official language.
Constantinople

During Constantine's rule over 600,000 people lived in the city.

Constantine convinced many wealthy Romans to move to the city by offering to build them palaces.

In 476 A.D. Rome fell to the Germanic invaders.

However the city of Constantinople and the eastern empire remained.

This is when the Byzantine Empire started.
Trade and Industry

Trade:
- Gateway between Europe and Asia
- Taxed goods traveling through the city

Trade and Industry made Byzantium wealthy.
- The *nomisma* (gold coins) became the standard coin throughout the Mediterranean.

*From the 5th to the 15th centuries Constantinople remained the greatest market and shipping center in the world.*

-Will Durant
Political Organization

Emperor: The head of the Empire
- Determined taxes
- Controlled the Treasury
- Controlled the Army
- Presided over all festivities
- Head of the Eastern Orthodox Church

The Emperor was the most powerful person in the Empire.

Justinian ruled the Byzantine empire from 527 to 565. During his reign, he:
- **recovered provinces that had been previously overrun by invaders.**
The Byzantine empire reached its greatest size under Justinian.
- **launched a program to beautify Constantinople.**
The church of Hagia Sophia improved on earlier Roman buildings. Today, it remains in tact as a blend of a church and mosque.
- **reformed the law.**
Justinian’s Code was a model for medieval monarchs, the Roman Catholic Church, and later legal thinkers.
- **used the law to unite the empire under his control**
Justinian ruled as an **autocrat**, or sole ruler with complete authority. He also had power over the Church.
## Christianity in East and West

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Byzantine Christianity</th>
<th>Western European Christianity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>• Byzantine emperor controlled Church affairs</strong></td>
<td><strong>• Pope controlled Church affairs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>• People rejected pope’s claim to authority over all Christians</strong></td>
<td><strong>• People accepted pope’s claim to authority over all Christians</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>• Clergy kept right to marry</strong></td>
<td><strong>• Clergy prohibited from marrying</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>• Greek was language of the Church</strong></td>
<td><strong>• Latin was language of the Church</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>• Easter was main holy day</strong></td>
<td><strong>• Christmas was main holy day</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>• Emperor outlawed the use of icons, or holy images</strong></td>
<td><strong>• Use of holy images permitted.</strong></td>
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1054 – Differences between east and west provoked a **schism, or permanent split**, between the Eastern (Greek) Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Church.
Decline of the Byzantine Empire

**External Factors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Invasions</th>
<th>Normans conquer southern Italy.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seljuk Turks advance through Asia Minor.</td>
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<td>Crusades</td>
<td>Trade rivalries lead to conflict with Venice.</td>
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<td>Knights capture Constantinople during Fourth Crusade.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ottoman Attack</td>
<td>Constantinople is captured by Turks.</td>
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<td>Constantinople is transformed into Muslim Istanbul.</td>
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</table>
The Byzantine Heritage

For 1,000 years, the Byzantines built on the culture of the Hellenistic world. Byzantine civilization blended Christian beliefs with Greek science, philosophy, arts, and literature.

The Byzantines extended Roman achievements in engineering and the law.

Byzantine artists made unique contributions that influenced western styles from the Middle Ages to the present.

Byzantine scholars preserved the classic works of ancient Greece. They also produced their own great books, especially in the field of history.
Scenario: George W. Bush wants his wife Laura to be the special advisor to the Secretary of Education. The Department of Education wants to revamp libraries in public schools and Laura Bush would be the head of that effort.

Your job: George W. Bush has sent you an email to ask you about your thoughts on the subject. In a one paragraph memo, write back to George W. Bush and tell him what you think.

The twist, did you know that Laura Bush has her college degree in education and a masters degree in library science? Did you also know that she was a former teacher, former school librarian, and worked for the Houston Public Library? Does this information change the way you feel?