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THE BEGINNING OF AN EMPIRE

According to legend, Rome was founded around 753 B.C. There were two brothers named Romulus (RAWM-yuh-luhs) and Remus (REE-muhs). The legends say they were raised by a wolf. One day, Romulus and Remus came upon an area of land. They decided to each build parts of a city. They fought over the sizes of their territories. Romulus killed Remus. Romulus became king of the city. He named the city Rome.

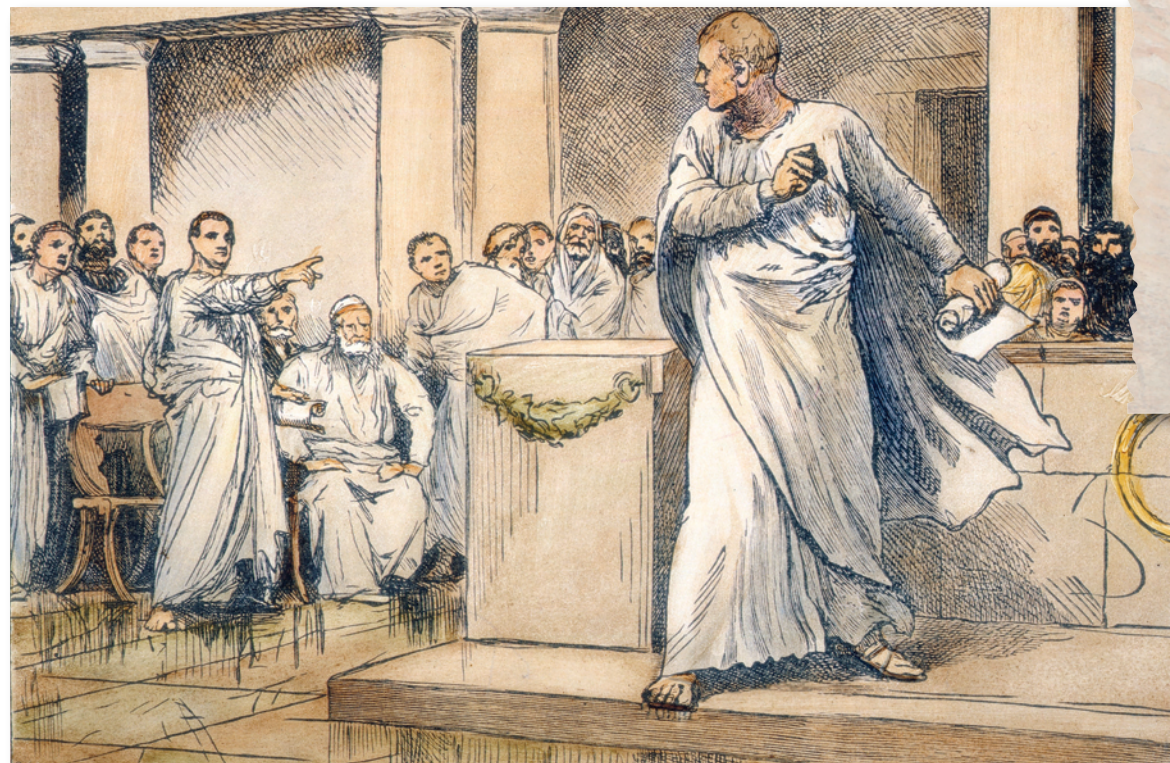
Kings ruled early Rome. Then, Rome became a **republic**. This meant that rulers were elected. The Roman Republic began in 509 B.C. and lasted almost 500 years.



Romulus and Remus with their wolf mother.

The Roman Republic had problems, though. The leaders in the Senate often argued about laws. They could not agree on public affairs. Also, many of Rome's citizens had no power in the republic. These common people were called **plebeians** (plih-BEE-uhnzh). They revolted because they wanted to force the Senate to make changes.

▼ Roman senators debated important issues.



The Senate Then and Now

The United States government is a republic. And, it has a Senate. However, there are important differences between Rome's Senate and the Senate in the United States. There were as many as 600 Roman senators at one time. They served for their entire lives. But, there are only 100 United States senators. And, they must be reelected every six years.