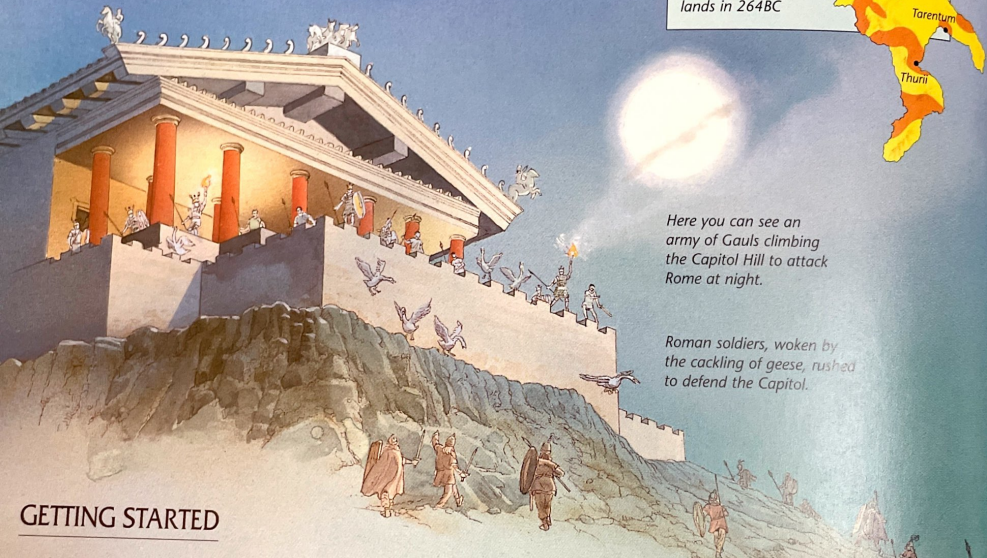
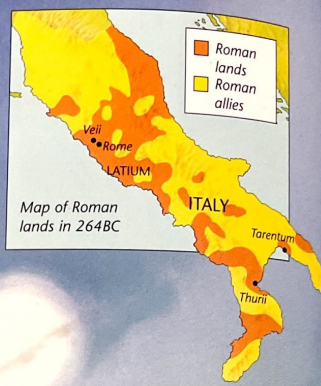


# THE CONQUEST OF ITALY

The Roman Republic was surrounded on all sides by enemies in its early years. To the north were the powerful Etruscans, while central Italy was swarming with fierce mountain tribes, such as the Volsci, the Aequi and the Samnites. At times, Rome was also at war with rival Latin cities nearby. By using a mixture of military power and clever politics, the Romans gradually managed to fight off their enemies and take control over their land.



Here you can see an army of Gauls climbing the Capitol Hill to attack Rome at night.

Roman soldiers, woken by the cackling of geese, rushed to defend the Capitol.

## GETTING STARTED

At first, the Republic wasn't strong enough to defeat the mountain tribes by itself and was forced to accept the help of a group of Latin cities, known as the Latin League. By 400BC, Rome was the leading city in the League, and the Republic had doubled in size. Soon, the Romans began expanding to the north as well, defeating the nearby Etruscan city of Veii in 396BC.

## ROME UNDER ATTACK

Then, disaster struck. An army of Gauls - a Celtic tribe from central Europe - swept south through Italy and defeated the Romans in a fierce battle at the Allia river. In 390BC, the Gauls attacked Rome, burned most of its buildings to the ground, and besieged the Capitol Hill - the religious heart of the city.

According to legend, the Gauls tried to creep up on the Capitol late one night, but they disturbed some geese that were kept at one of the temples. The cackling geese woke the Romans just in time. The Capitol was besieged for seven months, and when the Gauls eventually moved away, they left the city in ruins.