World History Name:

Mrs. Barnes Date:

Theories on the Fall of Rome Block:

Though 476 CE is the traditional date for the end of the Roman Empire, the factors that contributed to the decline of Rome combined into a deadly feedback loop over the course of hundreds of years. In any case, by 500 CE, the great light of the Roman civilization went black. The comforts and conveniences Rome had introduced—a society of laws, hot baths, central heating, main drains, sewer systems, efficient water supplies, and thousands of miles of roads—broke down and fell into disrepair. Civilization ceased to exist. By 500 CE, Europe entered an epoch of history known as the Dark Ages. The Dark Ages would last for nearly 1000 years (from 500CE to 1500 CE). During this time, Europe fell backward in time. Cities shrank back into towns and towns disappeared into desolate fields. Roman roads, aqueducts, bridges, and baths crumbled into piles of rubble. Constructing in stone turned to building with wood scraps. Murder, theft, rape, and arson became the order of the day. It was every man for himself. The Roman world of law and order collapsed into a black hole of anarchy. For half a millennium, Europe regressed to the law of the jungle. There was a sense of foreboding and pall of fear. Roman civilization was replaced by disease, chaos, and stagnation. This is why the adjective, “dark,” is used to describe this entire period of history. The light of civilization had been extinguished.

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| **Theories** | **Rate the Effect on Rome (1-10, 10 is worst)** | **Modern-Day Issue in U.S.** | **Rate the Effect on U.S. (1-10, 10 is worst)** |
| **Antonine Plague** |  |  |  |
| **Barbarian Invasions** |  |  |  |
| **Decline of Morals and Values** |  |  |  |
| **Environmental and Public Health Problems** |  |  |  |
| **Excessive Military Spending to Defend the Empire** |  |  |  |
| **Inferior Technology** |  |  |  |
| **Inflation** |  |  |  |
| **Length of Roman Sword** |  |  |  |
| **Theories** | **Rate the Effect on Rome (1-10, 10 is worst)** | **Modern-Day Issue in U.S.** | **Rate the Effect on U.S. (1-10, 10 is worst)** |
| **Military** |  |  |  |
| **Political Corruption** |  |  |  |
| **Rise in Christianity** |  |  |  |
| **Unemployment** |  |  |  |
| **Urban Decay** |  |  |  |

Follow Up Questions:

1. Which theory do you believe was ***mostly*** to blame for the fall of Rome? Why?
2. Which theory do you believe had little to do with the fall of Rome? Why?
3. Which theory do you think poses the biggest threat to the U.S.? Why?
4. Which of the above characteristics is the U.S. not currently threatened with?
5. Is it possible for the U.S., our civilization, to crumble as Rome did? How so? What would it take?