

Roman Roads

The Romans are famous for their roads. They built a road network so large and well constructed that parts of it remain today, roughly 2,000 years later. Roads helped the Romans run their empire. Armies, travelers, messengers, and merchants all used the roads to get around. They stretched to every corner of the empire in a network so vast that people even today say that “all roads lead to Rome.”



The Romans built about 50,000 miles of roads. That's enough to circle the earth—twice!

Roman roads stretched as far north as Scotland.

EUROPE

PYRENEES

In the west, roads crisscrossed Spain.

ITALY

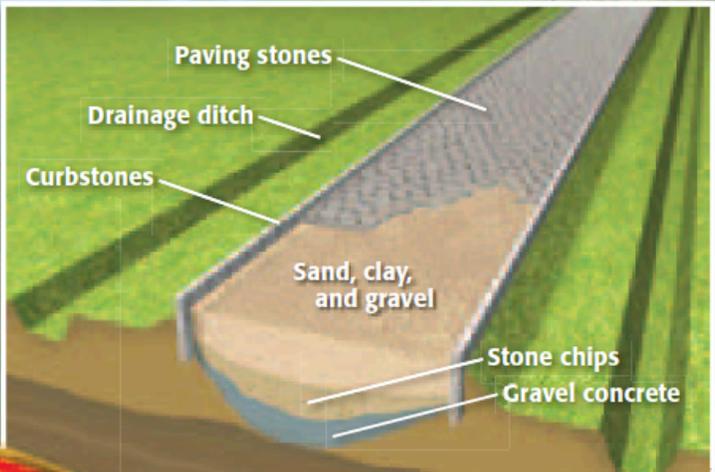
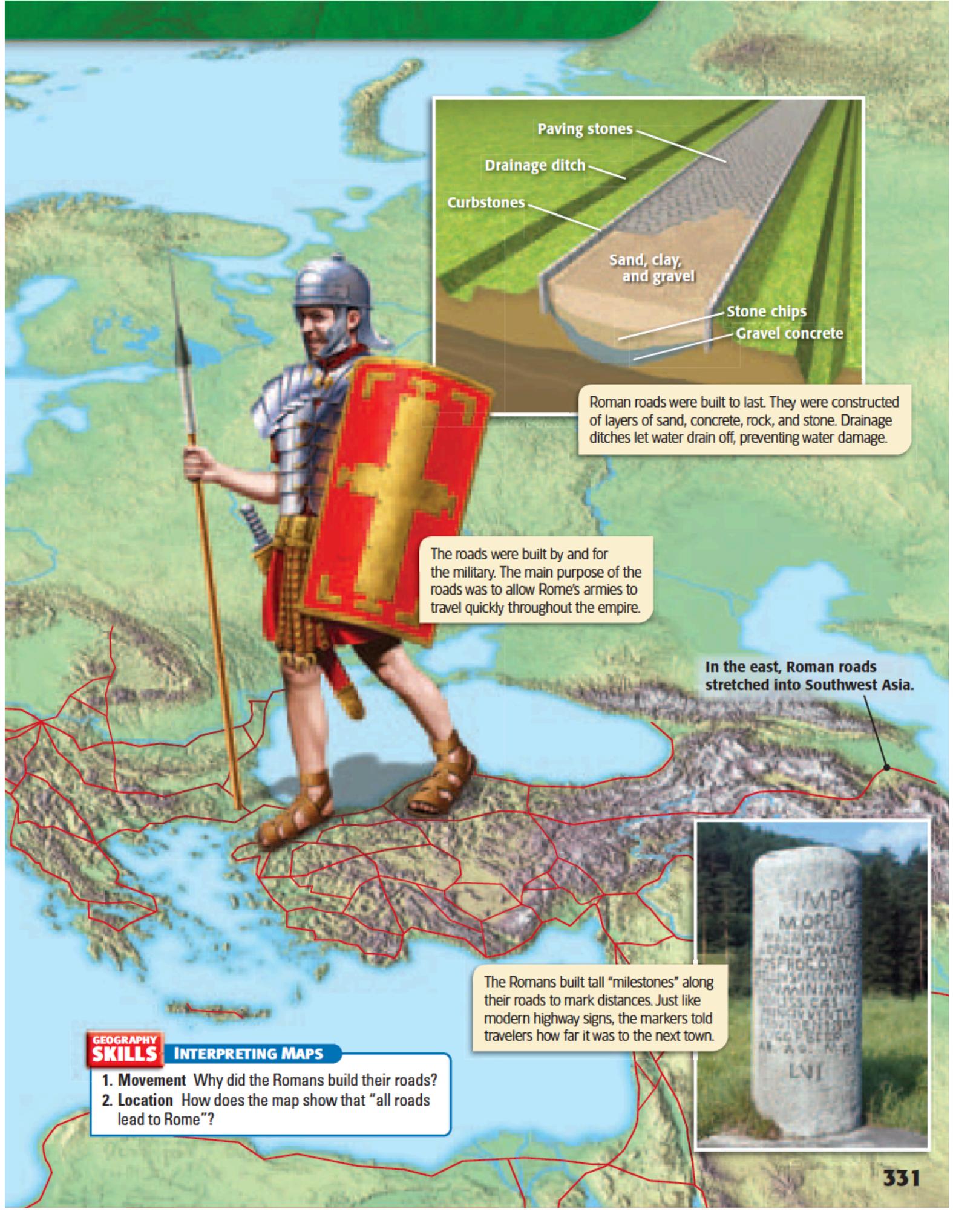
Rome

Roman roads in the south connected different parts of northern Africa.

Mediterranean Sea

AFRICA





Roman roads were built to last. They were constructed of layers of sand, concrete, rock, and stone. Drainage ditches let water drain off, preventing water damage.

The roads were built by and for the military. The main purpose of the roads was to allow Rome's armies to travel quickly throughout the empire.

In the east, Roman roads stretched into Southwest Asia.



The Romans built tall "milestones" along their roads to mark distances. Just like modern highway signs, the markers told travelers how far it was to the next town.

GEOGRAPHY SKILLS INTERPRETING MAPS

- 1. Movement** Why did the Romans build their roads?
- 2. Location** How does the map show that "all roads lead to Rome"?