In your opinion, what are the 3 main reasons that lead to the collapse of a civilization, society, or government? (Provide a short rationale for your reasons)
“While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand; When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall; and when Rome falls - the World.”

The Fall of Rome
Roman Empire at its peak in 117 A.D.
An Empire in Crisis

- **Constant Struggles for Power:**
  - Political Instability
    - In one 50 year period, at least 26 Emperors reigned! (With only 1 dying from natural causes)

- **Economic and Social Problems:**
  - Taxes
  - Overspending
  - Indentured Servitude
  - Over-cultivation
  - Set-up of Feudal system (Middle Ages)
Emperor Diocletian

- 284 A.D.: Emperor Diocletian decides to divide the empire in two
  - Did so as an attempt to fix economic problems
  - Inflation: the rapid rise of prices
Emperor Diocletian
After splitting the empire, Diocletian sought to solve the problem of succession. His solution was Tetrarchy or “rule of 4.” Diocletian was emperor east and Maximian his co-emperor in the west. They were each called Augustus. To facilitate succession and eliminate conflict, two Caesars were appointed below them. Galerius, in the east, & Constantius in the west.
Tetrarchy: “Rule of 4”
Emperor Constantine

- Son of Caesar Constantius
- Continued Diocletian’s reforms
- Tolerance of Christians
  - Before Constantine Christians were executed for their beliefs.
  - His tolerance encouraged the spread of Christianity throughout the Empire
- New Eastern Capital
  - Moved the capital to Constantinople in the east.
  - When western empire falls, the eastern portion continued to survive and prosper
Foreign Invasions

Invasions of the Roman Empire
100 - 500 CE

Western Roman Empire

Eastern Roman Empire

Rome

Carthage

Chalons 451

Adrianople 378

Constantinople

Angles, Saxons
Franks
Goths
Visigoths
Ostrogoths
Huns
Vandals

Angles, Saxons
Franks
Goths
Visigoths
Ostrogoths
Huns
Vandals
Foreign Invasions
“They have plundered the world, stripping naked the land in their hunger... they are driven by greed, if their enemy be rich; by ambition, if poor... They ravage, they slaughter, they seize by false pretenses, and all of this they hail as the construction of empire. And when in their wake nothing remains but a desert, they call that peace.”

— Tacitus
The Decline and Fall of Rome

Military Causes
- Germanic Invasions
- Weakened Roman legions

Political Causes
- Oppressive Government
- Corrupt Officials
- Divided Empire

Economic Cause
- Heavy Taxes
- Population decline

Social Causes
- Erosion of Traditional values
- Self-serving upper class
- “Bread and Circuses”