Ten Theories on the Fall of Rome
Barbarian Invasions

The Roman army had always been able to defend the borders of Rome, but now the army was changing. More and more “barbarians” entered Rome in search of land and food. Many of these people such as the Vandals and Visigoths were being pushed into Rome by the Huns.
Decline in Morals and Values

• Crimes of violence made the streets unsafe
• Romans had a passion for cruelty and this was seen in the gladiator games and beast hunts that took place in the Colosseum
Environmental and Public Health Problems

• It is possible that many Romans (especially the rich) died from lead poisoning

• Many water pipes were coated with lead and the water that was piped into homes was contaminated
Excessive Military Spending

• Maintaining the army to defend the borders of the empire was costly
• Military spending left few resources available for other vital activities like public housing or maintaining roads
• Romans lost their desire to defend the empire
• Emperors resorted to paying soldiers
• In order to pay for the soldiers, emperors had to raise taxes
Inferior Technology

• While Romans created great scientific achievements like aqueducts and concrete roads, they did not advance farm technology.

• Romans relied on slave labor on farms and soon the lack of new technology resulted in less food being produced.
Inflation

• Roman coins were made from gold and silver.
• As time passed, less gold and silver was put into the coins and the coins lost value.
• More coins were needed to pay for items because the coins were less valuable
• Many Romans turned to a barter economy
Political Corruption

• Roman emperors often came to power through the power of their personal armies
• Often the throne was sold to the highest bidder
• Later Roman emperors were corrupt and poor leaders
Unemployment

• Many Romans did not have jobs
• The unemployed crowded into the cities and lived off of the government
• The emperor had to feed these people and this was very expensive
• At one time, more than 100,000 people were unemployed in the city of Rome
Urban Decay

• Most poor Romans lived in multi-story apartments in the city
• Often the building were in danger of collapse or were infested with critters
• Romans who could not afford to pay rent lived on the streets
Rise in Christianity

- Christians refused to fight for Rome during a time when soldiers were needed
- Many qualified leaders of Rome turned to Christianity and refused to work for the roman government
- Many Romans put their money toward church building rather than the empire
Will there be any money for education?
MEAT PRICES

1 lb.  $3.00
Half lb.  $4.00
Quarter lb.  $5.00
Per slice  $6.00

"How many slices can you afford this week, ma'am?"