

# SCIPIO

**c. 236–183 BC**

**WHY HE MADE HISTORY** Scipio was the greatest general in Rome during the Second Punic War. He is best known for defeating General Hannibal.



*As you read the biography below, think about Scipio's courage as he defeated Hannibal of Carthage.*

Scipio (SIP-ee-oh), known as Scipio Africanus Major or Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus, was from Rome. His father was Publius Cornelius Scipio, the Roman general who was defeated by Hannibal in 218 BC.

Scipio was one of Rome's greatest generals. He never lost a battle. Scipio was skillful both in making strategy and in battle tactics. Scipio also had the gift of inspiring his soldiers with confidence.

Scipio was a man of great intellect and culture. He could read and speak Greek as well as Latin, and he was a skillful orator. Some people believed that Scipio was a favorite of the gods and that he actually held conversations with them. Scipio may have even believed this himself. Scipio's political opponents described him as harsh and arrogant, but other people praised him as being sympathetic and gracious.

Scipio was elected in 211 BC as **proconsul** in Spain. Within a few years, Scipio had driven the Carthaginians out of Spain. In 205 BC, Scipio returned to Rome and was elected as consul. He wanted to invade Africa, but his rivals refused to give him an army to do so. Scipio instead trained a

**VOCABULARY**

**proconsul** provincial governor in the Roman Republic

volunteer army in Sicily, and invaded Africa by 204 BC. It was there that Scipio encountered Hannibal of Carthage. Hannibal, who had been leading an army against the Romans in Italy, returned to Africa to try to make peace, but was unable to agree to Scipio's extreme demands. War resulted, and Scipio defeated Hannibal in 202 BC at Zama.

After the defeat of Hannibal, Scipio returned home and retired from public life. However, when he returned to Rome, Scipio was faced with political attacks from Cato the Censor. These attacks accused Scipio and his brother of misconduct in public affairs. They went to trial, but charges were never proven. As a result of these accusations, though, Scipio and his family fell out of favor in Rome, and were no longer influential or powerful political figures. Scipio died in 183 BC, after retiring to his estate in Liturnum.

### WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

1. Where did Scipio defeat Hannibal of Carthage?

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2. **Draw a Conclusion** Why did Scipio and his family lose influence on Rome?

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### ACTIVITY

3. Recall what you have learned about Scipio. Make a list of all the different locations mentioned in this passage. Next to each location (i.e. Spain, Rome), write one short fact or statement about the occurrences that took place there.