

How did Venice rise between the 9th and 15th centuries?

1 Geographical location

Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Venice's strategic location contributed to its development as a city-state and rise as a maritime empire.
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Its location at the northern tip of the Adriatic Sea gave it access to the Mediterranean. Hence, it was able to ship goods including sugar and spices to European states to be sold at high prices to reap large profits. The overland and sea routes allowed traders to ship essential goods like wheat between European cities and western products like iron, to the East.
Elaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Venice geographical location allowed it to achieve trade monopoly and huge economic growth. Venice was able to also achieve success because it was well linked to strategic trading outposts that provided supplies for trade and protection of the lucrative trade route.
Link	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thus, Venice's geographical location allowed Venice to secure a trade monopoly in the region and grow into a prosperous city-state and maritime empire.

2 Leadership

Establishing control in the Adriatic Sea

Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control of the Adriatic Sea led to the development of Venice as a centre for trade as it ensured that Venice had maritime control in the Adriatic Sea.
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doge Pietro II Orseolo saw that a peaceful region would boost trade. Thus, he reconciled feuding cities, negotiated treaties with major powers and subdued the pirates of Dalmatia.
Elaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By establishing control, Venice's independence was safeguarded, allowing her to obtain favourable trading terms. Venetian trading ships were protected as the Doge disallowed trading between Venetians and states controlled by pirates. This cut off their supplies for necessities e.g. salt, thus preventing their growth.
Link	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> His leadership ensured that Venice maintained an upper hand in controlling the territory at the Adriatic Sea to maintain trade monopoly. It also attracted more merchants to trade with Venetians, hence contributing to the development of Venice.

Building the Venetian Empire

Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doge Enrico Dandolo played a significant role in building the Venetian empire.
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the 12th century, he directed the Fourth Crusade which became a campaign to overthrow the Byzantine Emperor and take over the capital at Constantinople.
Elaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This event weakened the Byzantine Empire and helped Venice to rise further. Venice gained recognition from other states by capturing Constantinople. It controlled some of the territories that were important for trade which had belonged to the fallen Byzantine Empire.
Link	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> His leadership managed to ensure that Venice got the best trading terms and territories to boost its economy, hence contributing to the rise of the city-state.

Expanding the Venetian empire in the Mediterranean Sea

Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Doge Pietro Ziani succeeded Doge Enrico Dandolo to expand the Venetian empire.
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• He concentrated on expanding trade through conquests and set up military outposts along important trade routes.
Elaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eventually, he helped to ensure that Venice gained control of important routes in the Mediterranean Sea and enjoy sustained economic development.
Link	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• With the foresight of her leaders, Venice was transformed from a small city-state into a huge, powerful and wealthy maritime empire.

3 Reforms in the government

Meeting the challenges of a growing city-state

Creation of the Great Council

Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Great Council was created in the 12th century and was made up from up members from influential families.
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It elected capable members to all councils in the government, settled disputes among members of different councils, passed laws and meted out punishments.• To prevent competition rivalry from destabilising the government as the nobility grew, the Great Council expanded in the 13th Century.
Elaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Great Council, ensured that Venice was not short of capable leaders to drive the growth of the city-state.• The expansion of the Great Council also ensured that more nobles had the opportunity to decide on Venice's future.
Link	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This helped Venice to build up a capable government to meet the needs of the people and the growing city-state.

Specialisation of duties

Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As Venice grew, there was a need to reorganise the duties of the Great Council.
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Council of Forty was created in the 13th century. It handled matters of law, finances and coinage.• A 60-member Senate was added as trade expanded and relationships were established with more countries. It oversaw matters concerning foreign relations, commerce and the operations of Venetian fleets.
Elaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The specialisation of duties, ensured that maximum attention could be paid to the individual issues so that they could be resolved more effectively.
Link	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thus, Venice was able to draw on the strengths of each council to enable it to rise to power.

Maintaining checks and balances

Preventing the concentration of power

Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Another political reform that led to the success of Venice was the prevention of the concentration of power.
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To discourage rivalry among the nobles and prevent an individual or family from dominating the government, balloting was introduced to the election process.

Elaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nobles who had been appointed were not allowed to reject the position. This ensured that all positions of responsibility were filled up.
Link	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thus, preventing the concentration of power and providing different families with leadership opportunities ensured that Venice had competent leaders that ensured political stability, thus contributing to her success.

Effective checks on power

Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining checks and balance was another important political reform that contributed to Venice's success.
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council of Ten which consisted of the Doge, 6 Ducal Councilors and 3 Heads from the Council of 40 was set up. It monitored activities of organizations and officials, ensuring that there were no corrupt practices or abuse of power by the Doge or any high-ranking official.
Elaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doges guilty of nepotism (<i>the practice of favouring relatives or friends by giving them jobs</i>) or who tried to become too powerful were arrested by the Council of Ten or sent to exile. Hence, attempts to stage uprisings and acts of treason were stamped out, ensuring political stability.
Link	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This political reform thus contributed to a competent Venetian leadership which made sensible decisions that led to the success of Venice.

4 Trade developments and expansion

Attitude towards trade

Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Venetian's positive attitude towards trade was important as the key to the development of Venice as a centre of trade.
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Venetians knew how to obtain favourable trading terms by lowering tax rates compared to their trade rivals like Genoa. Traders were able to bring in valuable goods like spices from the East. Venetians also possessed an enterprising spirit, were adventurous and explored new routes, supplies and markets. For example, Marco Polo's calculated risks led to the discovery of the Silk Road to China.
Elaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Venice thus had a competitive edge over rivals and became a centre of trade. This attracted more traders and eventually more profits. The exploration of overland trade routes formed good relations with the Far East, allowing Venice to become a centre of trade.
Link	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive attitudes towards trade ensured that Venice constantly looked out for economic growth opportunities, allowing it develop its trading ties and routes.

Overcoming trade competition

Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Venice was able to overcome competition from Genoa.
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After a series of wars, Venice defeated Genoa in the late 14th century.
Elaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This allowed Venetians to control the Mediterranean Sea and this brought them more international trade.
Link	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By overcoming trade competition, Venice had one less obstacle in economic expansion and could thus concentrate its efforts on trade development.

Innovations in maritime technology

Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Innovations in maritime technology helped to enhance trading capacity.
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The mariner's compass ensured that ships stay on course despite bad weather helped it to dominate the Mediterranean Sea.• Thorough knowledge of shipbuilding helped them to design superior vessels propelled by oars and sails to sail further than normal ships.• This facilitated trade expansion and territorial control.• The building of a great galley, a superior war-cum-merchant vessel protected them from pirates.
Elaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The innovations in maritime technology ensured that trade and economic expansion of Venice was not limited by physical limitations such as bad weather and great distances or human limitations such as the presence of competitors.
Link	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Innovations in maritime technology thus paved the way for further discoveries, expansion and ultimately to Venice's success.

Efficiency in managing voyages

Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Venetians were efficient in managing voyages.
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maritime technology enabled efficiency in arrival and departure of voyages.• The Senate also came up with an effective management system that organised and monitored the schedule of trade voyages and grouped traders, ordering them to travel in a convoy.
Elaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This increased frequency in voyages as traders were able to travel during winter and galleys were capable of transporting more goods.• Trade was safer in the event of pirate attacks and more profitable in larger quantities and aided Venice's expansion.
Link	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The efficiency in managing voyages encouraged and attracted more foreign traders to trade in Venice and helped Venice flourish into a centre of trade.

Trade monopoly

Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Venice gained monopoly in the Mediterranean region after defeating Genoa in the 14th century.
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Central and Southern Europe relied on the Venetians for goods from the East as Venice was strategically located at the northern tip of the Adriatic Sea.• Using both overland and sea routes, Venetian traders went to Arabian ports such as Alexandria and Hormuz to buy and later sell goods to other European states.
Elaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As these goods were sold at a very high price, Venetian traders reaped large profits.• Dominance by Venice's navy allowed it to provide a larger variety of goods from the East, unlike Genoa and the Hanseatic League.• The European states had very little choice other than to buy them from Venice.
Link	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This trade monopoly enabled Venice to capture the economic potential of the region and thus expand its economy.

5 Industrial Development

Trade-related industry

Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic developments such as trade-related industries expanded as Venice prospered.
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The expansion of trade benefitted the shipbuilding. Around 1100, all the shipbuilders were centralised at a new location, known as the Arsenal.
Elaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting up the Arsenal helped to prevent overcrowding and minimised noise pollution at the Bacino San Marco, the main trading port in the lagoon. The Arsenal was expanded to facilitate production when the demand for great galleys increased in the 13th century. It became the backbone of Venice's maritime industry and power.
Link	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industrial development that was related to its main economic driver- trade, enabled Venice to develop both trade and industries at the same time, thus allowing rapid and sustained economic expansion.

Manufacturing industries

Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growing demand for goods promoted the growth of manufacturing industries.
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Besides glassmaking, the Venetians also produced items like candles and scented soap. New industries like printing served the large reading public in Venice. Venice's extensive trade connections made it easy to find buyers for the goods and obtain supplies such as paper.
Elaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New industries created jobs for the people and Venice continued to prosper. This attracted skilled craftsmen such as those from other parts of Europe to settle down and work in Venice.
Link	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thus, manufacturing industries not only provided Venice with a source of goods for sale, but also created jobs for its people and attracted skilled workers who could in turn contribute to its economy, leading to a cycle of continued growth.

6 Innovative practices

Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Venetians also developed and introduced the use of innovative practices in trade and business.
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Double-entry bookkeeping was adopted to record business transactions. Giro-banking allowed traders to set up an account in a bank and make or receive payment by making requests at the bank regardless of where they came from.
Elaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The standardisation of the credit and debit columns and entries which are recorded by date helped traders to meet the needs of their business. Transactions could be carried out without the need for traders to carry different currencies.
Link	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These innovative practices facilitated further trade. Many traders came to Venice because they enjoyed the convenience and efficiency of Venetian's trade-related services.