

## Document D

**Source:** Excerpts about an Asian tribe called the Huns from *Roman History* by the Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus, c. 380 CE.

The Huns exceed any definition of savagery. They have compact, sturdy limbs and thick necks.... Although they have the shape ... of human beings, they are so wild in their way of life that they have no need of fire or pleasant tasting foods, but eat the roots of uncultivated plants and the half-raw flesh of all sorts of animals. This they place between their thighs and the backs of their horses and so warm it a little .... Huns are never sheltered by buildings, but ... roam freely in the mountains and woods, learning from their earliest childhood to endure freezing cold, hunger and thirst.... Huns are not well adapted to battle on foot, but are almost glued to their horses, which are certainly hardy, but also ugly.... Like refugees – all without permanent settlements, homes, law, or a fixed way of life – they are always on the move with their wagons, in which they leave.... Like unthinking animals, they are completely ignorant of the difference between right and wrong. Fired with an overwhelming desire for seizing the property of others, these swift-moving and ungovernable people make their destructive way amid the pillage and slaughter of those who live around them.

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## Document Analysis

1. Who was Ammianus Marcellinus?
2. What words and phrases does Ammianus use to describe the Huns?
3. What does Marcellinus mean when he describes the Huns as being “glued to their horses”?
4. Why might a Roman historian like Ammianus want to compare the Huns to “unthinking animals”?
5. How can you use this document to help explain the decline of the Roman Empire?