This chapter begins with a discussion of the perils of litigation in early Rome. It then describes the *legis actiones*, the five early forms of action in Roman law. All the *legis actiones* were characterized by strict formalism and were only available to Roman citizens. The actions-at-law were the foundation of early civil procedure. However, the excessive formality, archaic nature, and limited effectiveness of the *legis actiones* made it unsuitable in the long term for a rapidly expanding, economically vibrant Rome. The system fell largely into disuse in the late Republic and was formally abolished by Augustus in 17 BC, by which time the formulary procedure had long become established. The formulary system remained the operative system of civil procedure well into the Empire but was later abolished in favour of the *cognitio* procedure; its operation is considered in its developed form in the later Empire.