

# The Roman Colosseum







# TODAY'S LESSON

In today's lesson, you will learn about the political and social role of the Colosseum in ancient Rome. You will explore the impressive architecture of the Colosseum and investigate how it was built. You will also learn about Roman gladiators and their relationship with the Colosseum.



**Collaborate!**





# ANCIENT ROME

Ancient Rome was one of the most successful empires in world history. It grew into an enormous empire that covered most of Europe, parts of Asia, and Northern Africa. Unlike the ancient Greeks, who were famous for their artistic and intellectual endeavours, the Romans were famous for their military, political, and social achievements.



# ROMAN ARCHITECTURE

Ancient Roman architecture was certainly impressive. As you'll hear in the following video, "I didn't know man could build such things." Watch the video and see if you know what building they are talking about!



<https://www.youtube.com/embed/gp46l7jfUzo>





# COLOSSAL COLOSSEUM

The Colosseum was built by Emperor Vespasian and completed in Rome in 80 A.D. It could hold up to 80,000 spectators and was used for staging epic gladiator contests, wild animal hunts, executions, and even mock sea battles when the arena would be flooded!



# TOUR THE COLOSSEUM

The Colosseum draws millions of visitors each year. Let's explore the exterior of the Colosseum on the following slides.

As you look around, think about what is the main shape that the Colosseum is made of.





[https://cdn1.360cities.net/static\\_embeds/index.html?handle=flavian-amphitheatre-colosseum-rome-italy-ii&username=nearpod&secret=ca2b7819507d289ffc4ef3e0a44324dec42bbd838624d49a5027eb8cd08a1ff0](https://cdn1.360cities.net/static_embeds/index.html?handle=flavian-amphitheatre-colosseum-rome-italy-ii&username=nearpod&secret=ca2b7819507d289ffc4ef3e0a44324dec42bbd838624d49a5027eb8cd08a1ff0)



Studio Mambeau - Martijn Baudoin / 360cities.net





## ARCHES UPON ARCHES

The Colosseum took approximately ten years to build. At the time it was built, and still today, it is the largest amphitheatre ever built. On the following slide, let's watch a short video about how the Colosseum was constructed using largely unskilled workers.





<https://www.youtube.com/embed/EO1NQy4oyJs>



# INSIDE THE COLOSSEUM

Now let's have a look at the inside of the Colosseum. Can you imagine what it would be like to have the stands filled with 60,000 cheering people? As you look around, think about what features you can see. What does the floor of the central arena of the Colosseum look like?





[https://cdn1.360cities.net/static\\_embeds/index.html?handle=inside-the-colosseum-rome-&username=nearpod&secret=4c5c22eec5d67c8e72bb4cef20b514b50957c578433bae4fef72c166ce6fb09f](https://cdn1.360cities.net/static_embeds/index.html?handle=inside-the-colosseum-rome-&username=nearpod&secret=4c5c22eec5d67c8e72bb4cef20b514b50957c578433bae4fef72c166ce6fb09f)



Gil Abadines / 360cities.net





# BUILDING THE COLOSSEUM

The Colosseum used highly innovative and complex technologies for the time. The arena had a wooden floor covered with sand, but beneath it was the *hypogeum*: a maze of corridors, rooms, and animal pens. Animals and gladiators alike would await their fate in the arena above. There were several ingenious lifting mechanisms, trapdoors, and ramps designed to suddenly introduce animals into the arena.



# Open Ended Question

**What kinds of similarities or differences do you see between the Colosseum and modern theaters or stadiums?**



# Slideshow



## POLITICAL PURPOSE

Emperor Vespasian built the Colosseum and other buildings to show the world that Rome was still the center of the ancient world. His coins were inscribed with *Roma resurgens* which translates to “Rome Rises Again,” and his construction program was designed to restore Rome to its former glory after the turmoil of a civil war.



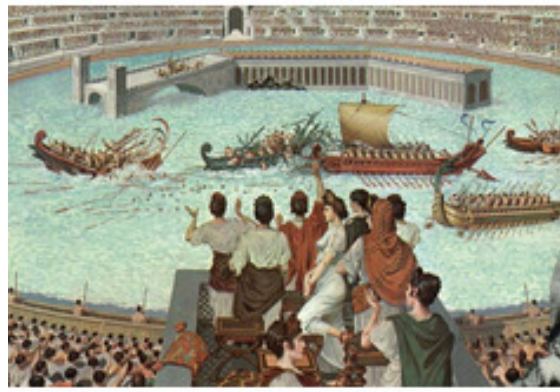


## EMPERORS' ROLE

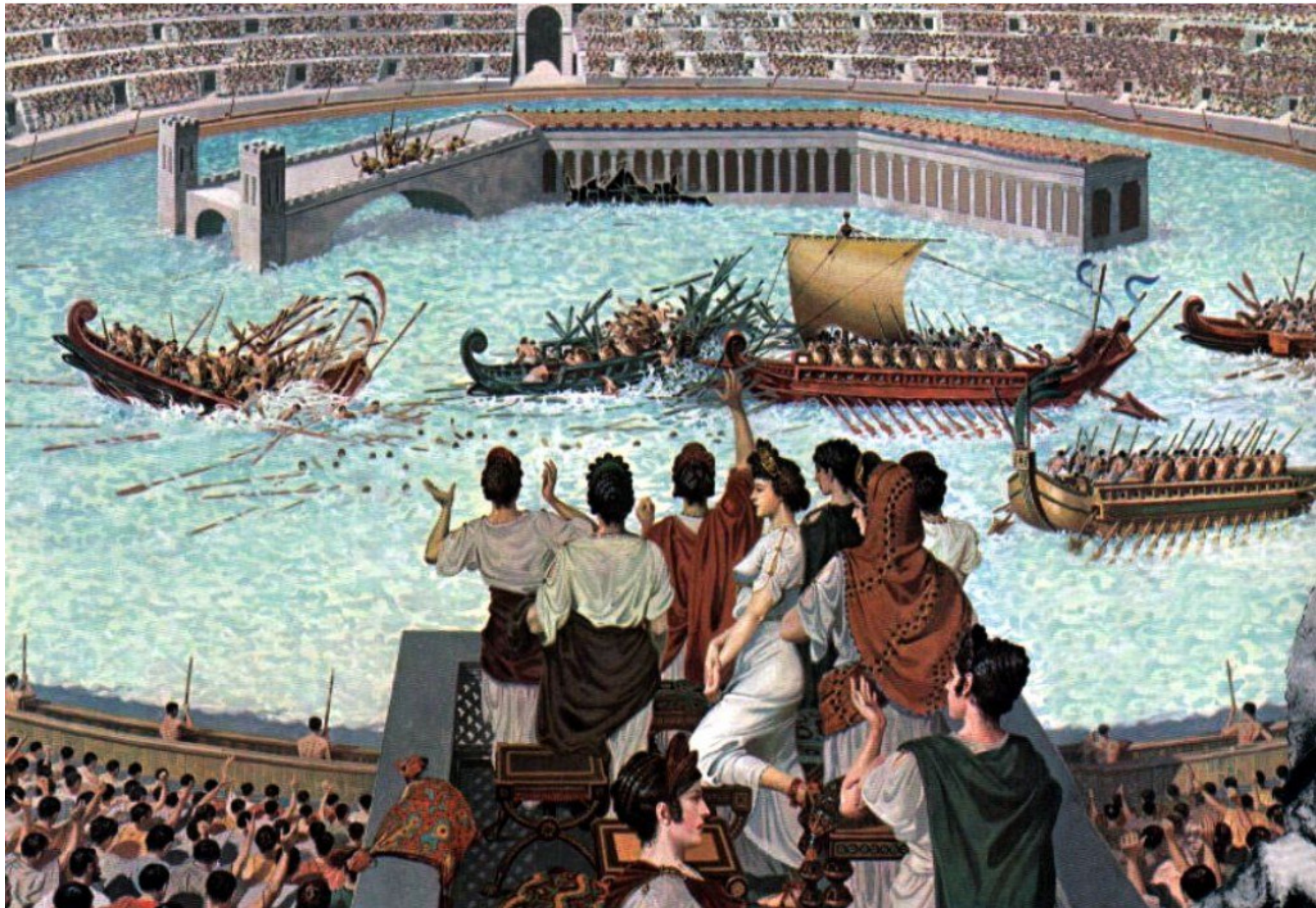
The Colosseum was an important backdrop for Roman political life. While the shows in the Roman arenas were designed to entertain, they also were a powerful tool in demonstrating the wealth and generosity of the emperor. Often the major events were organized and paid for by the emperors, and they did not charge entry fees. Ordinary people had the opportunity to see their generous leaders in person during these events, and it was a way for the emperor to gain support from the public.

# Draw It





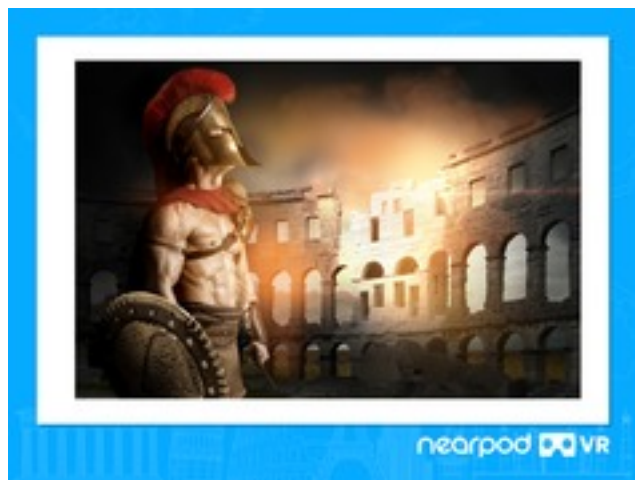
Often times the Colosseum was flooded from underneath to re-enact naval battles. Draw yourself and a friend joining in on the "fun".





# Poll





**Who do you think the gladiators were?**

- ☐ slaves
- ☐ criminals
- ☐ prisoners of war
- ☐ emperors
- ☐ free warriors
- ☐ soldiers

# Slideshow





# GLADIATORS

The Roman gladiators were professional fighters who fought at organized games at arenas like the Colosseum throughout the Roman Empire. At the beginning of gladiator games, most fights were slaves, criminals, or condemned prisoners. However, soon enough free men began to volunteer for the chance to win prizes and glory. The emperor Commodus was so passionate about gladiator fights that he even fought in the arena himself. Unsurprisingly, he always won his fights.



## GAME RULES

Most fights operated under strict rules, and contrary to popular belief, were not fights to the death. Gladiators were expensive to train, feed, and house, and the gladiator schools that invested in them didn't want to see them killed in action. Gladiators were trained to wound, not to kill, and all matches were overseen by a referee. Unlike what we see in movies and media, only one in five or one in ten games resulted in the death of a gladiator.



# Open Ended Question

**What was the relationship of the gladiators with the Colosseum?**



# Open Ended Question

**Why do you think there were so many kinds of people fighting as gladiators?**



# Quiz

**Which of the following was the key feature that allowed the Colosseum to be built?**

- ☐ the massive awning
- ☐ the arch
- ☐ brick
- ☐ marble



Much like modern times, the Romans broke down the construction of the Colosseum into simplified tasks repeated over and over again. This is known as...

- ☐ an assembly line.
- ☐ arches.
- ☐ standardization.
- ☐ mass production.

## What was the Colosseum used for?

- ☐ political speeches and debates
- ☐ protests and rallies
- ☐ religious meetings and events
- ☐ gladiator events and animal hunts



**What was the maze of corridors, rooms, and animal pens beneath the arena floor known as?**

- ☐ cellar
- ☐ basement
- ☐ hypogeum
- ☐ Roma resurgens

## Who were the gladiators?

- ☐ slaves and criminals
- ☐ emperors
- ☐ free warriors and soldiers
- ☐ All of the above.



What did you learn about gladiators and the Colosseum?



## Collaborate Board

**What did you learn about gladiators and the Colosseum?**

# Memory Test



