See You Later, Gladiator!

About the Show

The Book transports Joe, Sam and Fred back to ancient Rome 120 C.E.—and face-to-face with one big ol' gladiator. They've seen plenty of professional wrestling on TV—but will the smackdown body slam be enough to save them at the Coliseum?

Introduction

Studying gladiators in ancient Rome—a perennial favorite topic for students—can lead to discussions about stereotypes and myths. In exploring the images of gladiators in popular culture versus historical reality, students can explore the research process as well as the complexities involved in discerning fact from fiction.

Curriculum Connections

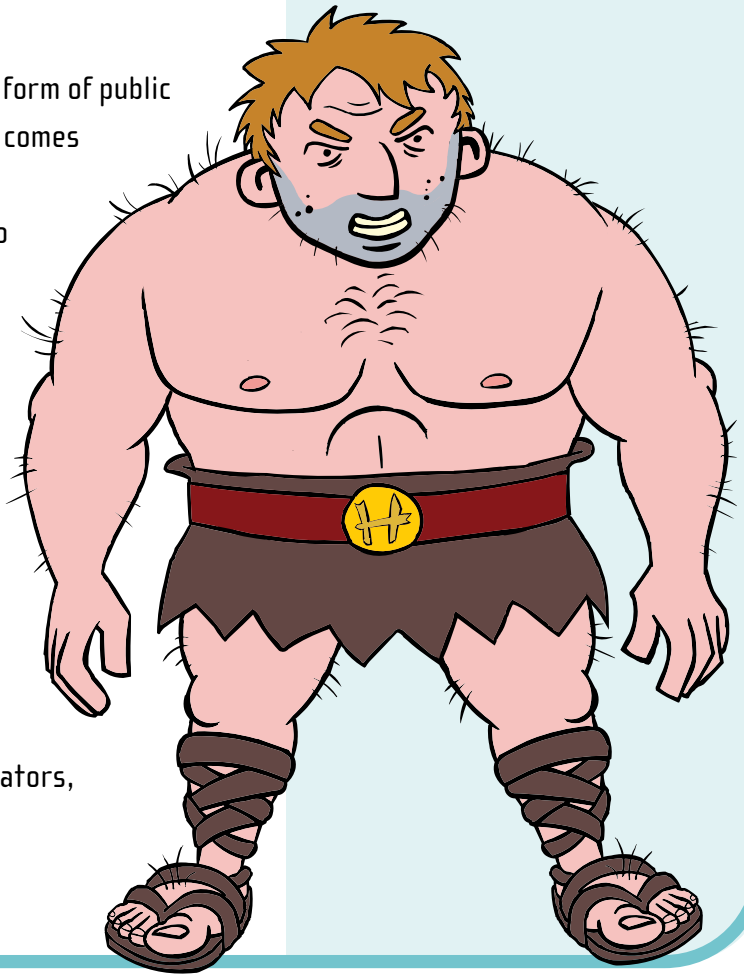
- ancient civilizations
- ancient Rome
- gladiators

Subject Areas

- art
- language arts
- social studies

Historical Background

Roman gladiators were trained in mortal combat, a form of public entertainment in ancient Rome. The word *gladiator* comes from the Latin word *gladius* (sword). Wealthy or important Romans often asked for funeral games to be held in their honor. In 264 B.C.E six men were hired to fight at a funeral—probably the first gladiators. The popularity of the games grew and spread throughout the Roman empire. Eventually gladiatorial games became lavish public entertainments, especially after the Coliseum in Rome opened in 80 C.E.



Roman gladiators were usually convicted criminals, slaves, or prisoners of war. Many gladiators came from the lands Rome had conquered. Although there were a few women gladiators, in 200 C.E. women were banned from fighting.

Historical Background *continued*

Some gladiators who managed to survive the fierce fighting became famous or even wealthy. Men of the very lowest social rank sometimes bound themselves to the owner of a gladiator troupe, enduring branding, chains, flogging, and brutality at the hands of their masters to become gladiators. Gladiators went through intense training and were taught complex moves so they could better entertain the audience.

Gladiators were supposed to fight to the death, but if they fought extremely well the crowd could decide to spare both fighters. The crowd voted by showing thumbs up or thumbs down—although whether or not thumbs up meant "life" has not been verified. Sometimes gladiators won prize money.

At a large event there could be hundreds of gladiators. In the Coliseum, the audience could be as large as 50,000 people. After other entertainments in the morning, such as hunting wild animals and the execution of criminals, gladiators would enter the arena. They would approach the emperor and proclaim, *Ave, Imperator, morituri te salutamus* (Hail, Emperor, we who are about to die, salute you).

As Christianity spread and the power of the Roman Empire declined, the appeal of the games diminished. In 326 C.E. Constantine began the process of abolishing gladiator games. In 400 C.E. Emperor Honorius banned gladiators forever.

Want students to get even more excited about history?



Check out the gladiators adventure for kids at

www.timewarptrio.com/adventures/gladiators/

Sandwiches of Time and other interactive games to play.

Plentifax 487—the ultimate time traveler's guide—to find out how gladiators lived and fought!

Cool Books that kids will love.

Activity 1

Let The Games Begin!

Students compare what they think they know about gladiators with facts they learn through research. They then use the information to act as reporters and write an article about a gladiatorial game.

Instructions

1. Both the book and the show *See You Later, Gladiator* portray Horridus as a laughable figure, but being a gladiator was not so funny. Ask students to volunteer what they already know about gladiators. Create a two-column chart entitled Gladiators. Label one column "Fact" and the other column "Fiction."
2. Divide the class into small groups. Explain that students will be researching gladiators, the conditions under which they lived and fought, and how they have been portrayed in books, movies, and legends.
3. After students share what they have learned, revisit the chart. Which items are facts? Fiction? Add new information to the chart and discuss the differences between the fictional portrayals and real gladiators.
4. Ask students to act as reporters and write an article describing a gladiatorial game they have just seen. Encourage students to include as many details as possible about the crowd, the events of the day, the emperor, the outcome of the games, what the gladiators wore, what nationality they were, etc.
5. You may want to offer students the option of being sportscasters. Working in pairs, students can interview a gladiator after a game. They will need to convey the information they have learned as they ask and answer questions. (Students may want to write a script of the interview beforehand.)

Take It Further

Have the students work together to create a mural of an ancient Roman town with a stadium on game day.

Objectives

- to expand students' knowledge of ancient Rome and gladiators.
- to practice research skills

Materials

- art and writing supplies
- chart paper and easel

Curriculum Standards

- **NCSS**
  Individuals, Groups, and Institutions: Students demonstrate an understanding of concepts such as role, status, and social class in describing the interactions of individuals and social groups.
- **NCTE/IRA**
  Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information.)

Activity 2

Gladiator "Step" Book

This activity helps students use similes in their writing and then present their knowledge about gladiators in the form of a "step" book.

Instructions

1. Ask students to use their imagination to visualize how a gladiator looks, sounds, smells, etc.
2. Ask the students the following questions. Encourage a wide variety of answers. Record their responses on the board.
   - *What do gladiators look like?*
   - *What do gladiators sound like?*
   - *How do gladiators smell?*
   - *How do gladiators eat?*
   - *What might a gladiator feel like?*
3. Distribute three sheets of paper to each student. Show students how to arrange the paper so they have a one-inch overlap on each page. Each flap is a "step." Demonstrate how to fold the paper into a six-page "Step" Book

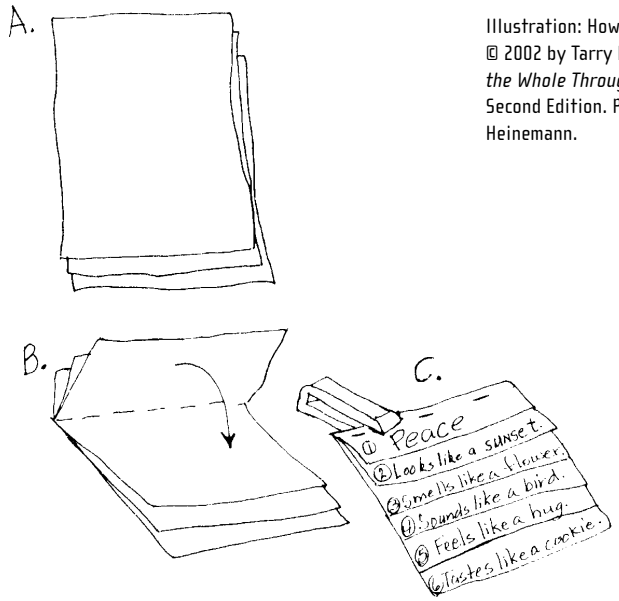


Illustration: How to Make a Step Book © 2002 by Tarry Lindquist from *Seeing the Whole Through Social Studies,* Second Edition. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Objectives

- to improve students' understanding and use of language
- to create similes
- to expand students' knowledge of ancient Rome

Materials

- art and writing supplies
- 3 sheets of white 8 1/2" x 11" paper per student

Curriculum Standards

- **NCSS**
  Individual Development and Identity: Students relate such factors as physical endowment and capabilities, learning, motivation, personality, perception and behavior to individual development.
- **NCTE/IRA**
  Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions, (e.g., spelling and punctuation, media techniques, figurative language, and genre) to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.

Activity 2

4. Have students write the title of their "Step" Book on the first page. Have students label each "step" with one of the following sentences.

   - Gladiators look like _____
   - Gladiators sound like _____
   - Gladiators feel like _____
   - Gladiators smell like _____
   - Gladiators eat like _____

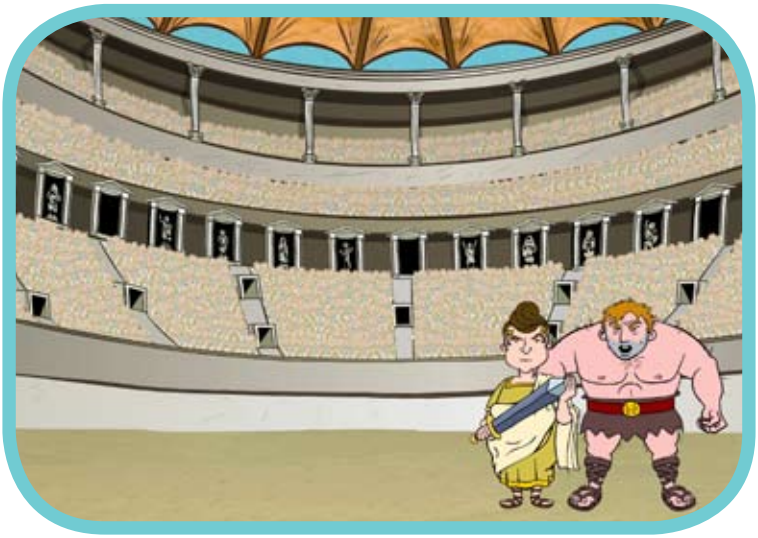
5. Ask students to complete each sentence and then draw a picture to go with it. You can also give examples, such as:

   - Gladiators look like mice caught in a giant cage.
   - Gladiators sound like monster trucks at an indoor rally.
   - Gladiators feel like gristle on a bone.
   - Gladiators smell like three-day-old meat.
   - Gladiators eat like hungry bears at the end of their hibernation.

6. Explain to students that they have been writing **similes**—a figure of speech that makes a comparison using either *like* or *as.* Writers use similes to make their descriptions richer.

7. Have students read each other's "Step" Books.

8. Ask students to notice similes in the books they read. For example, on page 83 of *See You Later, Gladiator* Jon Scieszka writes, "The green time mist slipped away like air leaking out of a tire." Challenge your students to find other similes as they read this or other books.



Resources

Recommended Books

For Teachers

As the Romans Did: A Sourcebook in Roman Social History, second edition, by Jo-Ann Shelton. (Oxford University Press, 1997) A wide array of documents, from letters to recipes to graffiti, reveals extensive information on the lives of the average Roman.

Daily Life in Ancient Rome: The People and the City at the Height of the Empire by Jerome Carcopino. (Yale University Press, 2003) A classic account of imperial Rome, using primary source materials.

The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Daily Life, Volume 1 edited by Joyce E. Salisbury. (Greenwood Press, 2004) A comprehensive look at the lives of ordinary people in ancient times—their clothes, food, culture, customs, beliefs, etc.

Handbook to Life in Ancient Rome by Lesley Adkins and Roy Adkins. (Oxford University Press, 1998) An overview of the Roman world, illustrated with photographs, maps, and line drawings.

The Penguin Historical Atlas of Ancient Rome by Christopher Scarre. (Penguin, 1995) This book explores the growth of the Roman empire and its legacy.

For Students

Fiction

The Assassins of Rome by Caroline Lawrence. (Roaring Brook, 2002) The Roman Mysteries series. Flavia and Nubia follow their friend Jonathan on a secret mission to Rome and the Golden House of Emperor Nero.

Atticus of Rome, 30 B.C. by Barry Denenberg. (Scholastic, 2004) Sold into slavery by Roman soldiers, Atticus uncovers a plot to murder the emperor, and finds his father, now a gladiator.

Detectives in Togas by Henry Winterfield. (Harcourt, 2002) Rufus may make mischief, but he is not a robber or defiler of the Temple of Minerva. It's up to his classmates to prove his innocence.

Galen, My Life in Imperial Rome by Marissa Moss. (Silver Whistle, 2002) This notebook-style book combines fact and fiction in telling the story of a 12-year-old slave.

Rome Antics by David Macaulay. (Houghton Mifflin, 1997) A homing pigeon provides a bird's eye view of the most famous constructions of the ancient Romans.

See You Later, Gladiator by Jon Scieszka. Illustrated by Adam McCauley.(Puffin, 2002) Can the Trio make it through gladiator school and win in the Coliseum?

The Silver Branch by Rosemary Sutcliffe. (Farrar, 1993) Two cousins join the Roman army to fight against a cruel British leader. See also *The Eagle of the Ninth* and *Outcast* by the same author.

The Thieves of Ostia by Caroline Lawrence. (Roaring Brook, 2001) The Roman Mysteries series. Flavia, a sea captain's daughter, is determined to discover who is killing dogs in 1st century Rome.

Nonfiction

The Ancient City: Life in Classical Athens and Rome by Peter Connolly and Hazel Dodge. (Oxford University Press, 2000) A description of everyday life in classical Greece and ancient Rome, illustrated with full-color drawings.

Ancient Rome by Simon James. (DK, 2000) Eyewitness Reference series. This book provides information about ancient Rome through drawings, maps, captions, and photographs.

Ancient Rome Revealed by Peter Chrisp. (DK, 2003) Transparent overlays show the inside story of the Roman Empire at its height of power.

Emperors and Gladiators by Anita Ganeri. (Peter Bedrick Books, 2001) Investigate some of the job opportunities open to ancient Roman citizens, from soothsayer to vestal virgin.

Resources

Gladiator by Richard Watkins. (Houghton Mifflin, 2000) This book offers an in-depth look at the lives of gladiators.

Gladiator's Secret by John Malam. (Gareth Stevens, 2004)
This fictional story about a young museum volunteer on a fact-finding trip to Europe includes pictures, diagrams, and facts about a gladiator's life.

The Roman Colosseum
by Elizabeth Mann. (Mikaya Press, 1998) A look at ancient Roman civilization as embodied by the Colosseum and its famous games.

The Roman News by Andrew Langley. (Gareth Stevens, 2000)
Presents details of daily life in ancient Rome in a humorous newspaper format.

Spend the Day in Ancient Rome: Projects and Activities That Bring the Past to Life by Linda Honan. (Wiley, 1998) Ideas for crafts and other activities that give readers a taste of life in Rome in 125 C.E.

You Wouldn't Want to Be a Roman Gladiator! Gory Things You'd Rather Not Know by John Malam. (Franklin Watts, 2000) This light-hearted book offers facts about gladiators with cartoon illustrations.

Poetry

Ancient Rome by Susan Altman and Susan Lechner. (Scholastic, 2001) Buildings, residents, and activities of ancient Rome are the inspiration for 27 brief poems.

Web sites

THE GLADIATOR
ablemedia.com/ctcweb/consortium/gladiators.html
This site, part of the Classics Technology Center, offers free teaching and learning materials created by teachers and students.

ROME: COLOSSEUM
greatbuildings.com/buildings/Roman_Colosseum.html
A brief look at the Colosseum with photographs, architectural drawings, 3-D models, and historical facts.

THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE FIRST CENTURY
pbs.org/empires/romans/
This companion site to the PBS series offers information, timelines, and classroom resources. Includes a simulation that explores leadership and the difficulties leaders face when making decisions.

ROMAN GLADIATORIAL GAMES
depthome.brooklyn.cuny.edu/classics/gladiatr
Created by the Brooklyn College Classics Department, this site offers detailed information about gladiatorial games, gladiators, and emperors.

SECRETS OF LOST EMPIRES: ROMAN BATH
pbs.org/wgbh/nova/lostempires/roman/
This companion site to the PBS series *Secrets of Lost Empires* offers timelines and classroom resources. Includes detailed information about the famous Baths of Caracalla, a challenge to build a successful Roman aqueduct, and recipes.

TIME WARP TRIO
www.timewarptrio.com
This site for kids includes interactive games, fascinating facts, and booklists that help make the past come alive.

Please note:
Although these sites were verified at the time of publication, Web site addresses and content are frequently subject to change.

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