

# Ancient Rome

**Discover the mysteries of ancient Rome!**

**This teachers' supplement should be used in conjunction with Project Pull-out #23: Ancient Rome, which is found in DMAG's issue 76, July 2008. The Project Pull-out will inspire students to learn about ancient Rome and see the similarities and differences between cultures in the past and present.**

**These activities encourage students to:**

- Learn about ancient Rome
- Understand how people lived in Roman times
- Research the lives of famous Romans
- Locate places on maps and understand that maps change
- Explore people's belief systems
- Use DVDs, library books or the Internet to find information
- Understand that history is pieced together through various bits of 'evidence'

**History and Critical thinking: How do we know?**

Ask the class to brainstorm why it is we know so much about ancient Rome even though the Roman Empire existed over a thousand years ago. What clues do we have about how the Romans lived? Some possible answers/prompts are:

- Pictures – like murals and mosaics that show scenes from Roman life
- Statues and engravings – that show

people, gods and even animals

- Buildings, roads and structures – many of these still remain and have been uncovered
- Artefacts – like coins, pots, jewellery and furniture
- Written accounts by Romans and other people from civilisations that encountered the Romans

Ask the class to discuss what evidence suggests that some Romans lived a life of luxury? Use some of the pictures and text in *DMAG* to prompt them.

**Extension exercise:**

Ask the class to think about how we know that Hannibal, from Carthage, marched elephants from Africa to Italy. What evidence from the past would indicate that this really happened? Would buildings or artefacts indicate this? What about written accounts – would someone have been likely to



write about it?

Would a Carthaginian's account of Hannibal's exploits be different to a Roman's account? Discuss. Ask each person in the class to find an account of Hannibal's travels and conquests. As well as finding this account, ask them to find out about the person who wrote the account – where were they from? Why were they writing the account? Would they be likely to be biased?

**English: Life in Roman times**

Read pages 52-54 entitled *Everyday Life*, and if you are able, watch some of the BBC DVD series *Roman Mysteries*.

Discuss as a class the types of people that would be found in the Roman Empire: citizens, slaves etc. Talk about the differences between the various classes of people.

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## Discover the mysteries of ancient Rome!

Ask each person in the class to research one of these famous people from Roman times:

- Pliny the Younger (note: Pliny is depicted in the series *Roman Mysteries*)
- Spartacus
- Nero
- Augustus (also known as Octavius)
- Constantine

### They are to find out:

1. When the person lived
2. What he was famous for
3. What his personality was like
4. Some of the things he would have witnessed in his lifetime
5. What everyday life would be like for him

Then ask each student to write a short piece about the person.

### Art: Draw it

Imagine you are the director of a TV series set in Roman times. Your task is to make the series as realistic looking as possible.

Ask the students to draw a picture from the series. They're to draw a 'storyboard' that shows a snapshot from the TV series.

### Each student can choose to draw one of the following scenes:

- Dinner in the house of a wealthy citizen entertaining guests
  - The marketplace with people buying and selling food
  - Soldiers training or marching
- Before they start drawing they should research what the people would be wearing, what their surroundings would look like, etc. Let the students



know that even if they're not good at drawing, it doesn't matter, the more detail that they put in that is factually correct (for instance, the weapons the soldier might be carrying) the better.

### Maths: Mapping

Ask the students to complete the first exercise on the activity sheet. Discuss how over time the Roman Empire expanded. Ask the students to compare the map of the Roman Empire on page 49 of *DMAG* with the same region today.

**Extension exercise:** Work out where Hannibal marched his army – and elephants – to get to Italy. Draw this on the map.

### Mapping: A tourist's guide

Tell everyone to imagine they've won a holiday to Europe/Africa/Asia to see some Roman ruins. Before they go, they'll need to prepare a map of all the places to visit. As a class, draw a large map of the Roman Empire in 79 AD, or when the Empire was at its peak in 116 AD.

Then ask each student to find pictures on the Internet of different Roman ruins and locate them on the map. Make sure they find ruins

from across the Empire - eg from Roman baths, in Bath, England, to amphitheatres in Turkey. Print off the best pictures and as a class vote on which pictures to stick on the map.

### HSIE: Cultures and beliefs

Ask the class to read *DMAG's* project pull-out and write on the board some of the Roman gods that are mentioned. Ask the class to do the exercise "The God of ..." on the activity sheet.

Tell the students that one way to remember the Roman gods is to remember the names of our planets. Ask each student to choose one of the Roman gods and write a short story about one of the exploits of that god.

## Roman Mysteries

The BBC series *Roman Mysteries*, which is out now on DVD,

is a great way for students to see what life was like in Roman times. Based on the lives of four fictional characters, the series shows everyday Roman life and introduces many famous Romans. Gripping and entertaining, this series is highly recommended.

