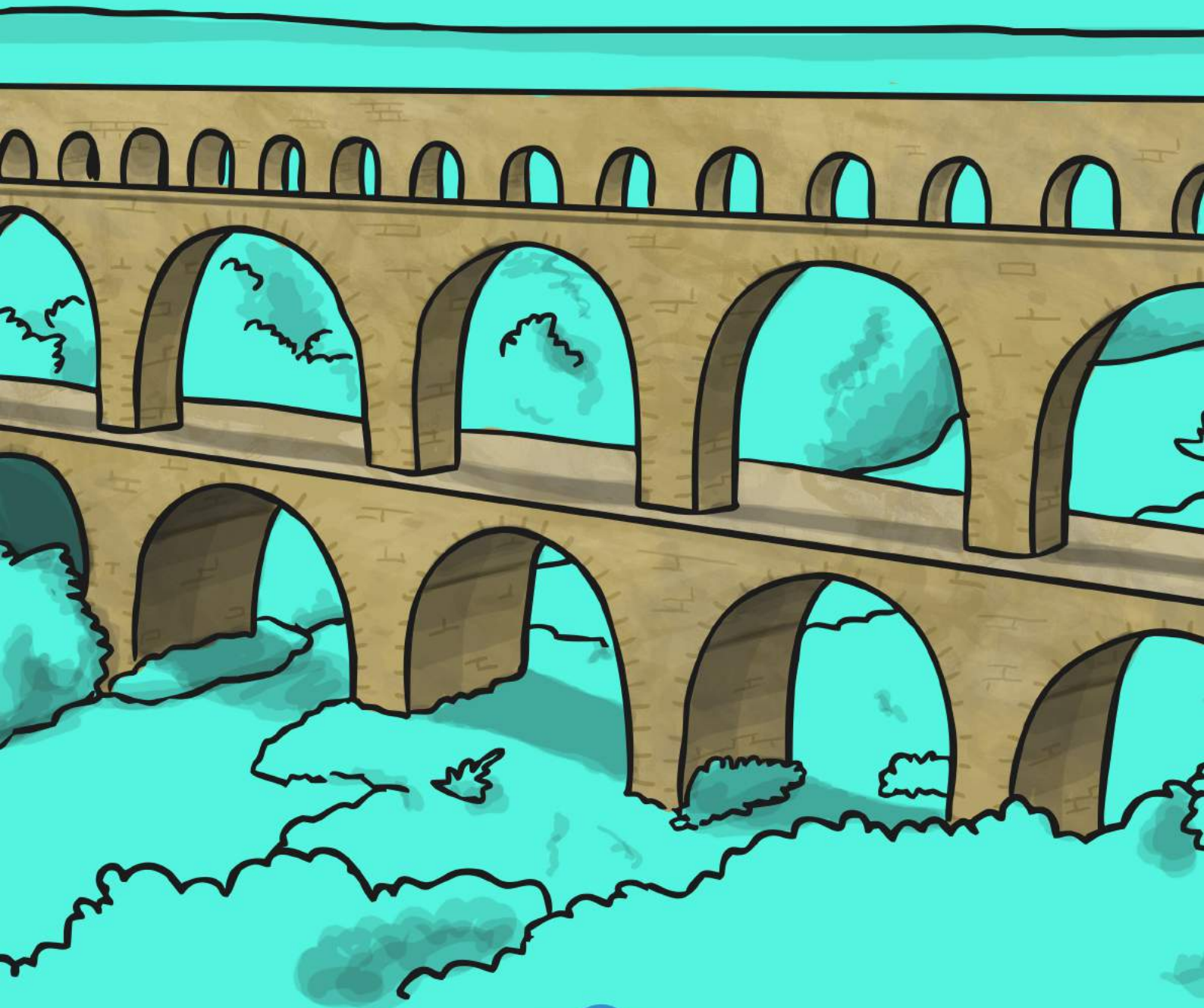


THE ROMAN EMPIRE

753 BC - 1453 AD



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How did it start?

The start of the Roman Empire begins with the reign of the first emperor, Augustus. By this point they had already taken land from other countries but it was the emperors that wanted to spread their power throughout the world. After the success of Augustus, other powerful Emperors like Claudius, Nero and Vespasian (more on them on pages 8-9) expanded the Empire, taking much of West Asia. The empire reached its largest under Emperor Trajan when it took over land which is now split into 40 different countries.

Who were they?

The Romans lived in Rome, a city in the centre of the country of Italy. They put together an army to take over new land and they were very successful. This map shows all the land they managed to take for their empire in yellow. The empire reached all the way around the Mediterranean Sea including Greece, Spain, Turkey and all of northern Africa. They even took England and Wales. The size of the Empire changed a lot, when countries fought for their land back or when other empires took over but this map is when they were at their most powerful (around 117 AD).

INVASION OF BRITAIN

The Celts

From about 750 BC to 12 BC, the Celts were the most powerful people in the Britain. The Celts lived in tribes and they spoke a similar language. The word Celt comes from the Greek work Keltoi, meaning barbarian.

The Invasion

In August 55 BC the Roman general, Julius Caesar, invaded Britain. He took two legions of men with him (there were 5,000 men in one legion). After many battles with the Celts in south-east England he left, eager to get back to Rome.

The next summer (54 BC) Caesar came back to Britain and landed in Kent. This time he brought 30,000 soldiers plus 2,000 men on horses (cavalrymen). The Celts lost many battles and agreed to give some of their valuables to the Romans if they left them alone.

Almost 100 years later Emperor Claudius had his turn at invading Britain. He sent 50,000 soldiers. Some of the battles lasted for two whole days! Some Celts agreed to obey Roman laws and pay taxes, but others fought on. The Romans were still fighting in Yorkshire and other parts of Northern Britain forty years later. They never actually gained full control of Britain. Colchester (Camulodunum) was the first Roman capital of Britain, which was later moved to London (Londinium).



Why did they invade?

The emperors were keen to extend their empire and therefore their power (and ability to collect more taxes). It is possible they wanted control of the land to access natural resources in the ground. Britain had many, including iron, lead, zinc, copper and silver. It may also be because the Celts in Britain helped the Celts from France who fled from the Romans, perhaps the Romans wanted revenge.

Hadrian's Wall

After the Romans invaded England, they needed to defend it. Scotland was not part of the Roman Empire and the tribes from Scotland (the Picts) would come down and attack. There was frequent fighting between the Romans and the Picts. In 122 AD, Emperor Hadrian of the Roman Empire decided that a wall should be built to keep the Picts out. Parts of the wall can still be seen today, some of it many kilometres south of the modern Scottish border. It is the most popular tourist attraction in Northern England.

Why did they leave?

The Romans stayed in Britain from 43 AD and left in 410 AD. Over that time, they brought over many new ideas and inventions which you can see on the next page. The Romans eventually had to leave because Italy was under attack by strong tribes. Every soldier was needed to fight so the Romans living in Britain had to go and help.

ROMAN IDEAS THAT CAN STILL BE SEEN TODAY

1. Language

The language used in England today is taken from the Roman language. The Romans spoke and wrote in Latin which is the basis for many English words. They even had the oldest known newspapers or 'daily acts' as they were known as. They were written on metal or stone and left in a busy place for people to read.

2. The Calendar

The calendar used in many countries today (the Gregorian calendar) is based on the Roman version which is more than 2000 years old! It was called the Julian calendar, named after Julius Caesar. Caesar wanted to make a calendar which was based on the movement of the sun. It had 365 days.

3. Laws

The Romans put together many of the laws that are still used today. These include rules on divorce, housing and religion, and punishments for crimes like stealing and even black magic!

4. Roads

When the Romans invaded Britain, they built roads to make it faster for their armies to get around. Roads were built from stones and were much better than the mud tracks that were there before. Roman roads are famous for being very straight.



5. Central Heating

Underfloor heating today uses electric wires or water pipes under the floor. The Romans had a hypocaust system. The floor was built on top of piles of stone, and the air underneath heated by a furnace, kept going by slaves.

6. Concrete

Concrete is used every day in buildings and roads all over the world. The Romans started using it over 2,100 years ago because it made buildings stronger. This is why many Roman buildings are still standing today.

7. Aqueducts

Romans built aqueducts (below) to carry water across large gaps, showing a very impressive standard of engineering. The Roman aqueduct in Pont du Gard, France, is a top tourist attraction.



8. The Census

The Census is a Roman invention for counting the people living in a large area. A Census is still used today for the same reason.

9. Sewers

The Romans built large pipes underground to take away sewage, similar to the sewage pipes used today. It helped keep the dirt and disease away from the street.

EMPERORS

Before Emperors

Before the Emperors, Rome was ruled by rich politicians called senators. They gathered in the same way politicians do today. They would talk about the Empire and decide how it should be run.



The story of the first Emperor

After the assassination of Julius Caesar, Rome broke into civil war. Marcus Antonius, known also as Marc Antony, had been close to Caesar. He initially fought alongside Octavian (the adopted son of Caesar) against those who killed him, Brutus and Cassius. Two years later Brutus and Cassius were defeated in battles in Greece.

Marc Antony met Cleopatra, the Queen of Egypt, intending to accuse her of assisting Cassius, but Cleopatra tempted him with her beauty and threw him parties with expensive food and wine. Marc returned to Italy and married Octavian's sister, Octavia, and had two daughters. However, he had fallen for Cleopatra's charms and a few years later Marc returned to Egypt. Octavian claimed that he had been put under a spell by Cleopatra, who was already unpopular with the Romans, and declared war on her. After defeat in a battle at sea, and believing Cleopatra to be dead, Marc Antony killed himself. Cleopatra killed herself a few weeks later.

Octavian was given absolute power and changed his name to Emperor Augustus.

Quick Fact!

A lot of people think that Julius Caesar (left) was an emperor when actually, he never was. Caesar was a great leader of the Roman army who took over a lot of land and won many battles. He was almost the first Emperor but he was killed by his own people before he could.

(left) Julius Caesar

Crazy Emperors!

An Emperor could do what they wanted and get away with it. Some Emperors even thought they were Gods. Emperor Caligula dressed up as the Gods and got everyone to call him 'Divine'. Many people thought he was insane.

The duty of an Emperor

A good Emperor would work very hard. He would take meetings with people about money, laws, how to run the empire and about the military. He would have the final say on anything, he was in charge. Some Emperors would go to see sports like chariot racing and gladiator fights. The most famous Emperors were very good at leading their armies. Emperor Trajan (below) was the Emperor who grew the Empire to its largest because of his smart tactics in war.



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(below) Emperor Augustus (Octavian)



THE ROMAN ARMY

Soldiers

Only men could be in the Roman army because everyone in the Roman army had to be a Roman citizen and women were not allowed to be citizens. The minimum age was twenty. A soldier was not allowed to get married until they left the army. A soldier from Italy had to stay in the army for 20 years whilst a soldier from outside Italy had to stay for 25 years! The soldiers from outside Italy came from many places including Africa, France, Germany, Spain and the Middle East.

Army Sizes

The Roman army was made up of about 30 legions. Each legion had around 5,000 men in it and these soldiers would be called legionaries. Each legion had 10 cohorts. Each cohort was made of 6 groups of about 80 legionaries, called centuries. Each century was led by a centurion. Each of these centuries was made of contuberniums which had 8 men in them. These 8 men would fight together and camp together. The man in charge of the whole legion was called a legate.

Contubernium - 8 men

Century - 80 men

Cohort - 480 men

Legion - 5,000 men



The Centurion

A centurion (left) would be easily spotted in a group of soldiers. The large brush on the top of his helmet was called a crest and worn sideways, very different to the crest on a normal helmet. He would also wear a shirt of chainmail and a cloak made of fine material. Displayed on his chest would be medals given for bravery in battle. Unlike the legionaries, who would carry their weapons the opposite way round, the centurion would carry a sword on the left and a dagger on the right. He would also carry a stick to beat any soldier not following orders.

The Legate

The legate was in charge of the whole legion, it was a job for only the very best leaders. The legate got a large share of any of the rewards gained from taking new land. A legate would wear a bright red cloak and a waist band with a bow on it. There was a legate called Vespasian (below) who was such a good leader that he eventually went on to become Emperor.

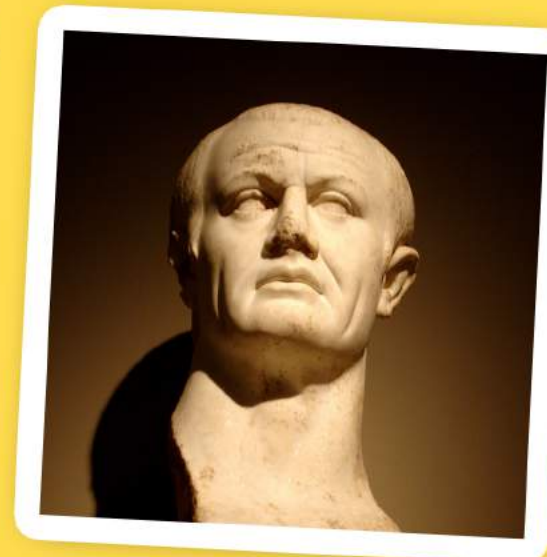
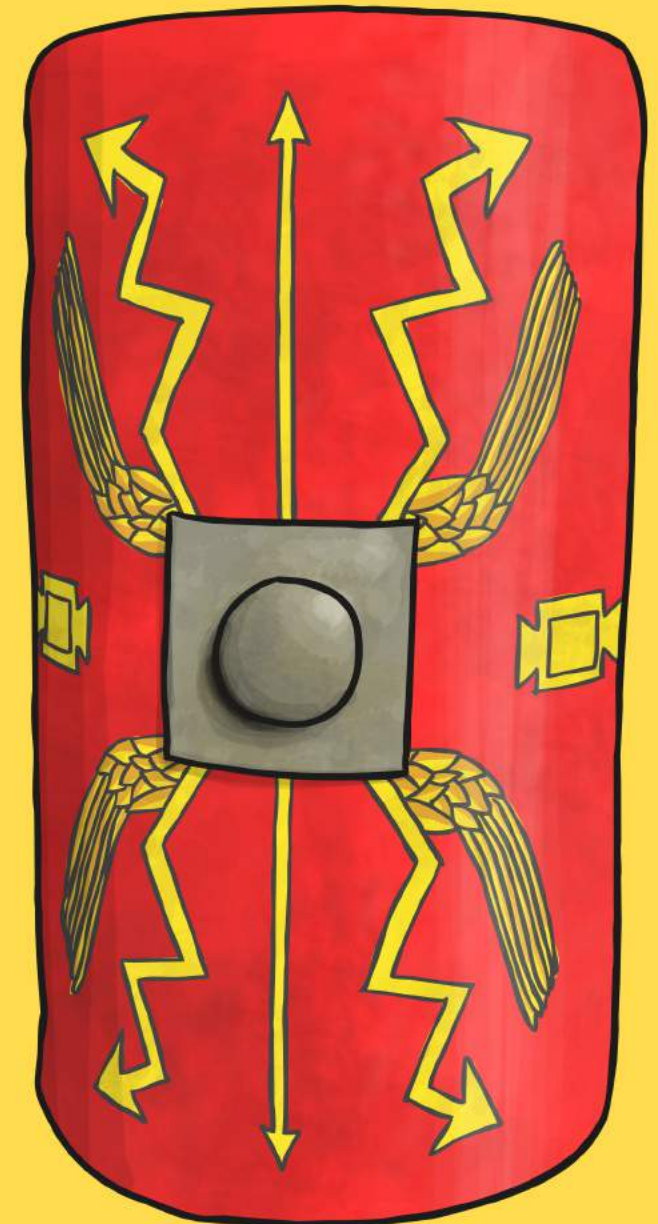


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Shields

Many statues and paintings found from Roman times show clearly what a Roman soldier would have worn and carried. A regular Roman soldier would have worn armour made from iron and leather. He wore a metal helmet and carried a rectangular shield like the one below. It was made from wood and leather and sometimes had a metal piece in the middle (a boss). They used short swords, spears and daggers.



BUILDINGS

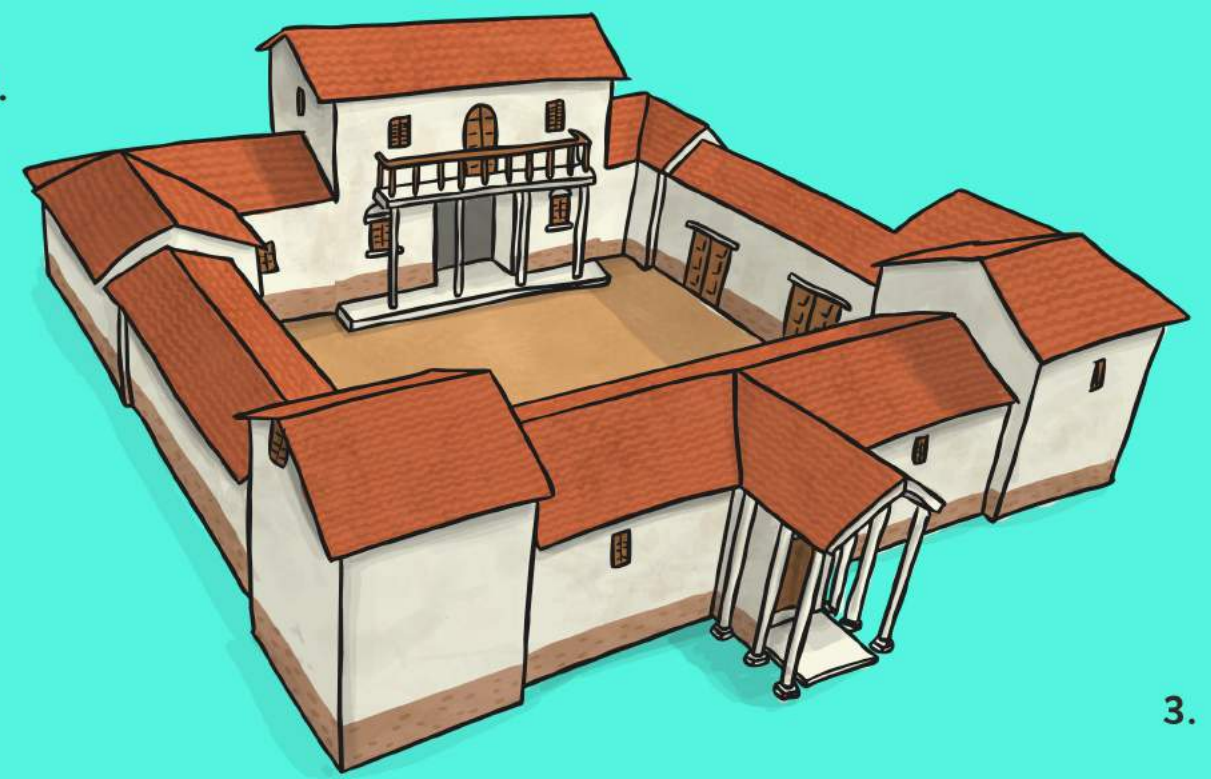
HOMES AND PUBLIC PLACES

1. Bath House. Every town had its own Roman bath. The Romans loved them so much that by 300 AD, they had built over 900 of them. Today most people have a bath or shower in their own house. Some of the wealthier families in Roman times also had their own at home, but the Romans were comfortable bathing in public and the bath house was a very social place. People went to a bath house if they wanted to be clean, to be social or for healing. It was considered a good day out, like people today might go to the cinema or bowling! Some of the larger bath houses even had games rooms and places to get snacks or dinner.

2. Roman Villa. A lot of Roman families lived in villas. The villa was a strong brick building, some of which have lasted until modern times. Ones like this picture (right) with an open courtyard would have been owned by quite a large, wealthy family.

3. Amphitheatre. The amphitheatre was an outdoor arena that was used for sports and entertainment. The stadium was circular or oval in shape and held events like gladiators, races, executions and speeches. About 230 amphitheatres have been found. The largest, the Colosseum, was ordered to be built by Emperor Vespasian. It could, it is estimated, hold up to 80,000 people.

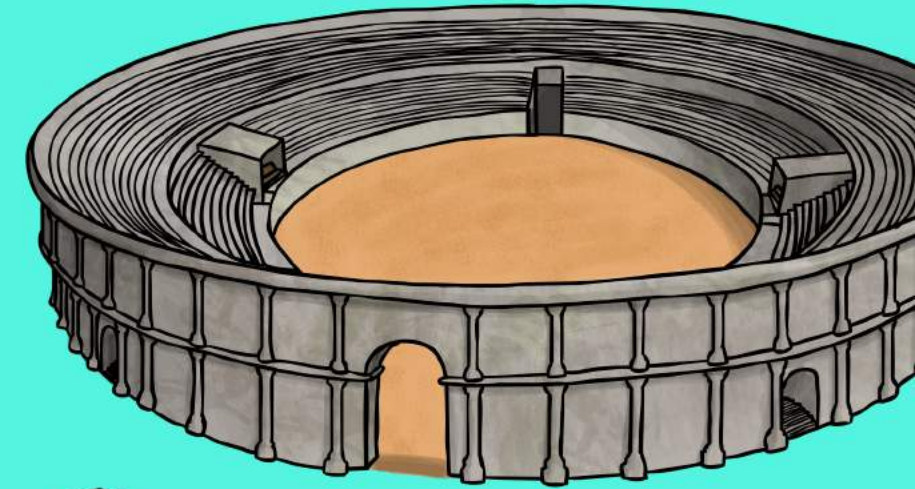
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4. Pantheon. The Pantheon is a building in Rome that was built during the reign of Emperor Augustus. It is a large circular building with columns at the front. It was used as a temple to the gods. It has since been turned into a Catholic church so it has kept the same use, but with a different God to worship.

4.



ROMAN GODS

A SUMMARY



From left to right:

- 1. Saturn.** God of wealth and time. Father of Jupiter, Neptune and Pluto.
- 2. Mars.** God of war. People thought he was the one who decided who died in battle.
- 3. Juno.** Goddess of marriage and childbirth. Queen of the Gods.
- 4. Mercury.** God of money, poetry, travellers and thieves. Guided souls to the underworld.

- 5. Pluto.** God of the dead. He looked after the souls in the afterlife.
- 6. Minerva.** Goddess of wisdom, art, medicine and magic.
- 7. Neptune.** God of water, storms, horses and earthquakes.
- 8. Jupiter.** God of the sky and lightning. King of the Gods.

- 9. Diana.** Goddess of the moon, hunting and childbirth. Apollo's twin.
- 10. Apollo.** God of the sun, music, arts, archery, plague, medicine, light and knowledge.
- 11. Venus.** Goddess of love and beauty, mother of the Roman people.
- 12. Cupid.** God of love and affection.

Religion was very important in daily life. If the gods were angry, terrible things would happen. People worshipped these Gods and believed that sacrificing animals was the best way to please them. Sometimes the Gods would build a temple to one God but a temple for all the gods was called a pantheon.

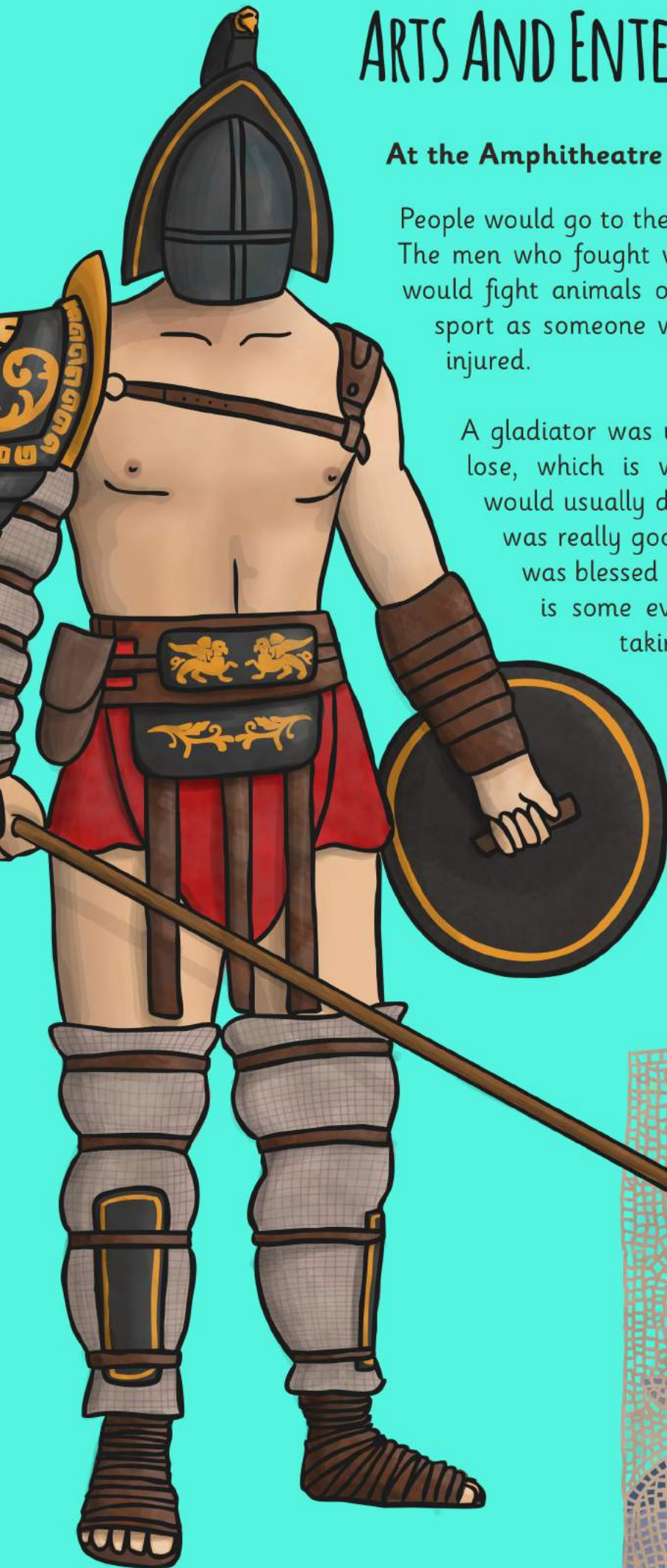
ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

At the Amphitheatre

People would go to the amphitheatre mostly for the fighting. The men who fought were called gladiators (left) and they would fight animals or against each other. It was a cruel sport as someone would usually be killed or very badly injured.

A gladiator was usually someone who had nothing to lose, which is why slaves, criminals and prisoners would usually do the fighting. If one of these fighters was really good and kept winning, they thought he was blessed by the gods and let him go free. There is some evidence though of freemen (Romans) taking part too as a way of proving that they were the toughest fighters. Only strong men were chosen so they knew the fights would be more exciting and last longer.

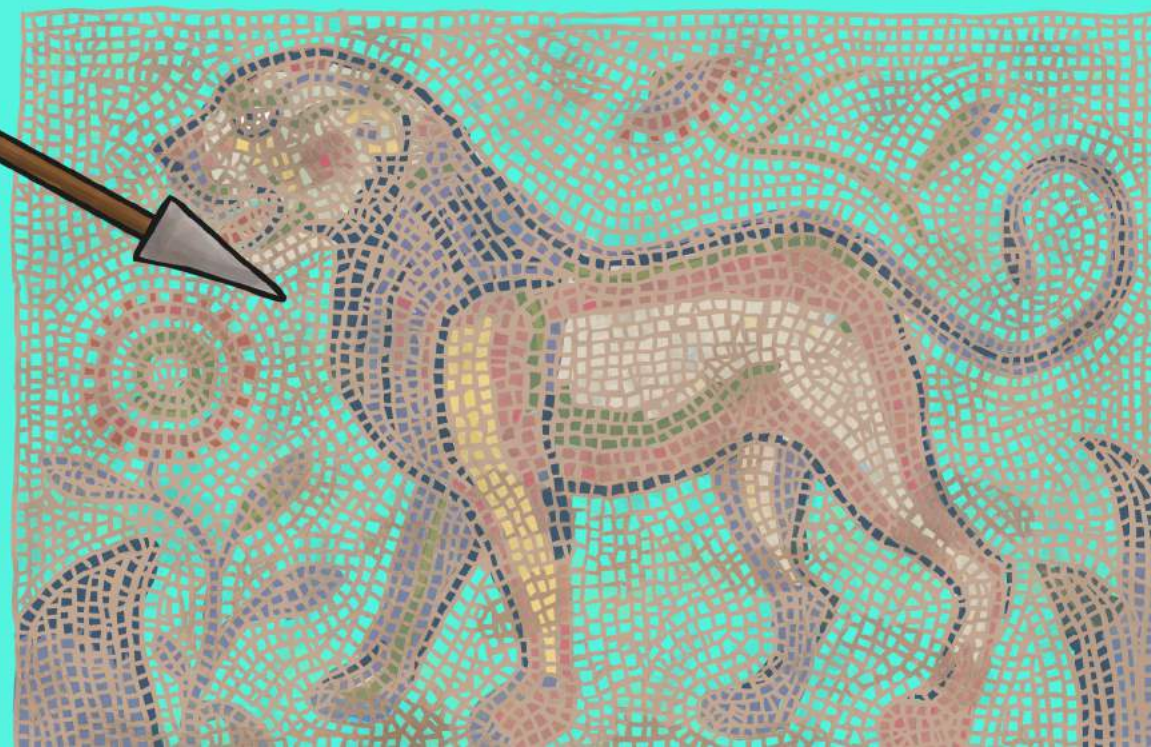
A lot of slaves were also made to race chariots, small carts led by horses. People would bet on their favourite and hope to see a crash.



Music and Plays

It would be quite common to see some kind of performance at a special occasion like a wedding, party or religious festival. It might have been music or maybe a play or poetry reading. The instruments they played were not too different from the ones we have today. Popular instruments included lutes (similar to a guitar), panpipes, organs and horns.

The actors in plays were always men. Rich people would pay for the play to be put on and allow people to watch for free, as a way of honouring the gods. If an actor did not act well, people would throw food and anything else they could get their hands on. Performances included comedies, tragedies and pantomimes.



Mosaics and Statues

A mosaic is a picture or a pattern made with small pieces of ceramic tiles. Many mosaics are made to remember important pieces of history like Emperors or battles. Having a mosaic was a very expensive piece of art so having one was a way to show off your money and how important you were. The tiles were stuck down with a type of cement and would be made up of thousands of pieces.

The art of making statues (sculptures) was taken from the Ancient Greeks. They were usually made from marble or stone and depicted gods or emperors. Emperors would order large marble busts (head and shoulders) to be made of themselves to demonstrate their importance.

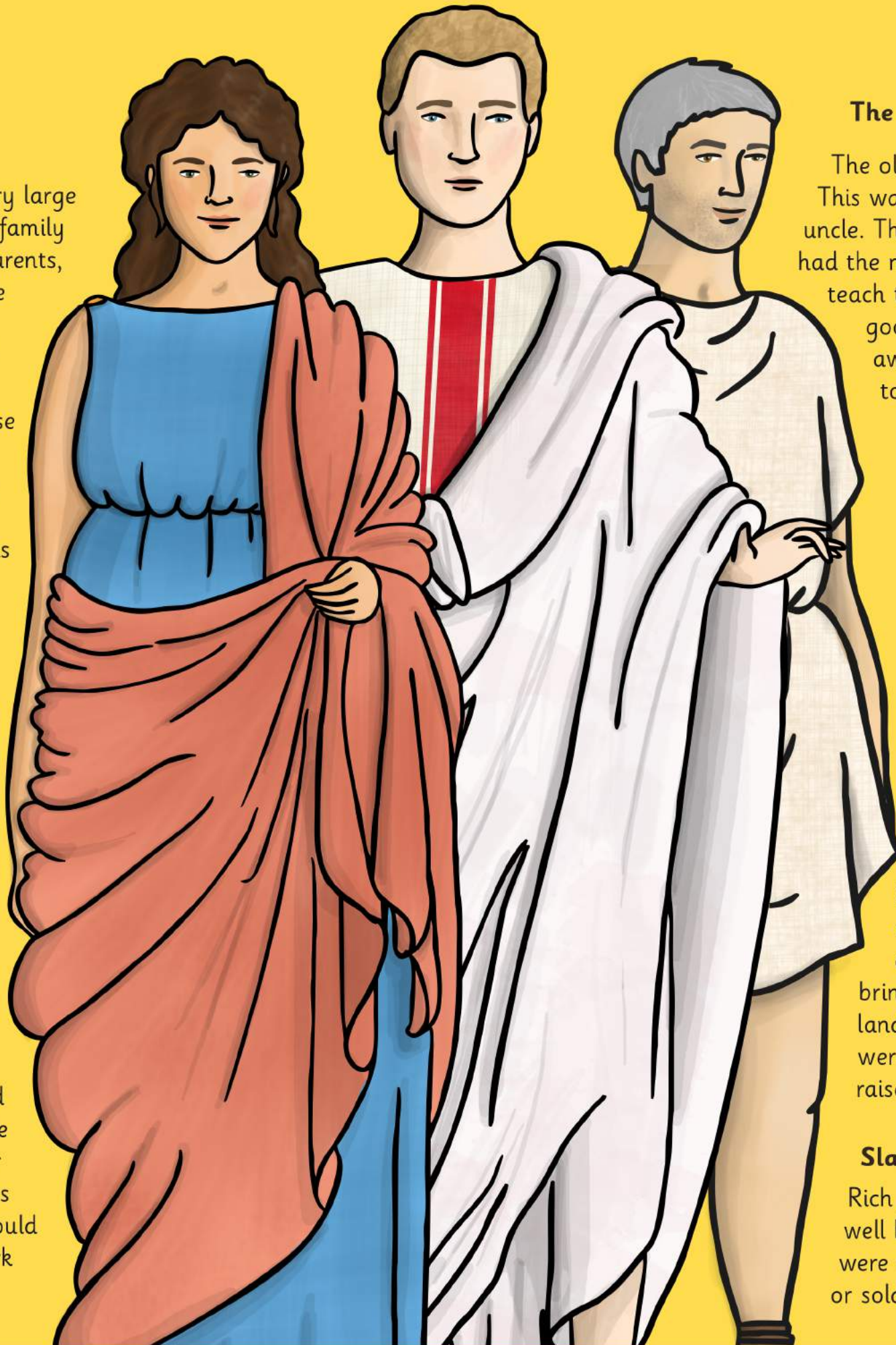
FAMILY LIFE

The Family

Roman families were very large because the sons in the family would stay with their parents, even after marriage. The daughters in the house would often be married by the age of 14 and then left the family house to live with their husband and his family. The house was usually run by the father, he was the most important.

Women

Women had almost no rights and were thought of as property that could be owned. A woman's job was to clean, to cook and raise children. If the wife had a daughter then it was her job to teach her how to be a good wife for her future husband. Life was very difficult for a woman until the Roman Empire grew and women gained rights like the right to own land or get a job. If a family was wealthy enough, they could get slaves to do the work instead.



The Paterfamilias

The oldest male in the house was called the paterfamilias. This was usually the father but it could be a grandfather or uncle. The paterfamilias owned the land and the buildings and had the most power in the family. Their job in the house was to teach the younger men how to trade, learn and how to be a good man. The paterfamilias could also banish (send away) members in the family, beat them or sell them to slavery if they wanted.

Children

The children in the family were loved and would be educated as much as possible so they could get a good job and bring money back for the family in the future. A lot of children in Roman times did not go to school. Only rich families could afford to pay a teacher. Most schools were in towns so it was difficult for the people living further into the country. In poor families girls and boys had to work, helping their parents.

Romans could adopt children too. It was considered pleasing to the gods to take another child into your family. Romans would bring back children that had been taken from new lands and families would adopt them. Some of them were made into slaves but most were taken in to be raised to be good, Roman citizens.

Slaves

Rich families owned slaves. Most slaves were treated well because they cost a lot of money and many families were very close with their slaves. A slave could be bought or sold but could also be freed.



FALL OF AN EMPIRE! END OF ROMAN BRITAIN

Barbarians

From the 2nd century AD (100-200 AD) Roman Britain was under attack by people from outside of the Roman Empire. The Romans called them barbarians. The Roman army kept them away from Britain so well that the barbarians decided to attack other areas of the Empire instead. The tribes of barbarians in Europe like the Saxons started fighting in countries like France, Germany and even Italy.

By the 5th century (400-500 AD) the tribes attacking other countries had become so strong that the Romans needed to move their armies to deal with it. Emperor Honorius decided the Romans in Britain needed to help and by 410 AD the last of the Romans had left.

Anglo-Saxons

The barbarians were known as the Anglo-Saxons. They were mostly Germans coming to farm the land of Britain. The Anglo-Saxons used the stones from the Roman walls and castles because no Romans were there to defend them. They used a lot of the stone for building their farms.



Roman Remains

The Romans never came back to Britain. They did not have enough power to take back the land they had before. There were no Romans in Britain to fix the walls and forts so they just crumbled away over time. The people who lived in the land built new wooden buildings so they did not need the old Roman ones.

A lot of Roman remains can still be found in the UK though. One of the best examples is Hadrian's Wall (left) as a lot of it is still standing. Some of the old Roman roads (top right) are still there. This one is in Lancashire and it used to connect Yorkshire to Manchester.



Roman Legacy

The Romans left a lot of things behind. Not only did they leave their roads and their towns, they had brought over new animals and plants which were not native to Britain. They left the sweet chestnut tree, chickens and parsley, all still common today. Some other things they left behind were measurements (miles, feet and inches), Christianity (a lot of Britain was Pagan before the Romans arrived) and their language.

Hardly anyone in Britain could read or write before the Romans came so most of the history of the Roman invasion comes from the Romans, which makes it potentially biased. The Celts really only passed on information by word of mouth. The Romans spoke and wrote in Latin which the educated people in Britain still learnt and used after the Romans had left. Many remains of Latin can still be seen today, it is even used on the outside of a lot of UK pound coins.



70-73 AD
All of England and
Wales is taken

200 AD
Rome is attacked by
barbarians



735 BC
Rome is built

202 BC
Rome takes land
outside Italy

55-54 BC
Caesar invades Britain
twice in two years

27 BC
Augustus (first Emperor)
starts the Roman Empire

80 AD
Colosseum is built

410 AD
Roman rule in
Britain ends



Roman Empire Timeline



510 BC
Rome becomes a republic

130 BC
Rome takes Italy
and Greece

44 BC
Caesar is
assassinated

45 AD
Emperor Claudius
invades Britain

122 AD
Hadrian's Wall
is built

455 AD
Roman Empire
collapses



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