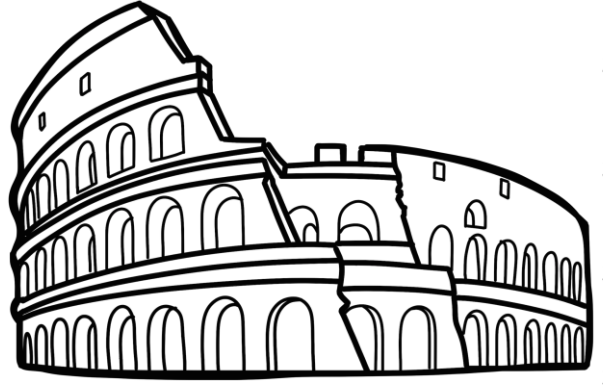


Ancient Rome: COLOSSEUM

In the center of **Rome**, Italy, there is a giant **amphitheater** known as the Colosseum. It was built during the **Roman Empire**. It held gladiatorial games and other public spectacles like mock sea battles, animal hunts, executions, re-enactments of famous battles, and dramas.



CONSTRUCTION

Emperor **Vespasian** started construction on the Colosseum in 72 AD. It took eight years to complete. This massive structure could seat 50,000 people and covered around 6 acres of land. It is 620 feet long, 512 feet wide, and 158 feet tall. The Colosseum took more than 1.1 million tons of concrete, stone, and bricks to complete. Arches were made to keep the weight down, but still keep it strong. Stones were stacked on top columns in a rounded shape. Then they were held in place with central keystones. These helped the arches support themselves and heavy loads from upper levels. Four levels could be accessed by stairs. The Colosseum's floor was wooden and covered with sand.

VELARIUM

A retractable awning called the **velarium** kept the hot sun and rain off spectators. 240 wooden **masts** around the top of the stadium supported the awning. **Sailors** were used to put up the velarium when necessary. The awnings could be opened and closed to let air flow.



SEATING

Roman law dictated where people sat in the Colosseum. **Senators** had the best seats, then **equestrians** or ranking government **officials**, then ordinary Roman **citizens** (men) and **soldiers**. **Women** and **slaves** sat the top. Former **gladiators**, actors, and gravediggers were banned from the Colosseum. The Colosseum's best seat was the **Emperor's Box** because the Emperor often paid for the games and wanted to keep the people in his favor.

GLADIATORS

Most gladiators were prisoners of war, criminals, or slaves. They trained at gladiator schools and learned to use weapons. Their fighting skills entertained thousands of Romans. They fought to the death. Gladiators also hunted wild animals like elephants, lions, and tigers.



UNDERGROUND PASSAGES

A **labyrinth** of underground passages called the **hypogeum** was built below the Colosseum to allow for animals, actors, and gladiators to suddenly appear in the middle of the arena. 32 different **trap doors** added special effects, like scenery.

ENTRANCES

There were 76 entrances and exits to the Colosseum. This allowed thousands of people to exit the arena in case of a fire or other emergency. Public entrances were numbered and spectators had a ticket assigning their seats and entrance. The west exit was called the **Gate of Death** because dead gladiators were taken through it.

COLOSSUS

An enormous 30 foot bronze statue of Emperor **Colossus** of Nero stood outside of the Colosseum. It was later turned into a statue of the Sun god **Sol Invictus**. Some historians think the name for the Colosseum was named after Colossus.

END

Christianity spread throughout the Roman Empire over the centuries. This changed many people's feelings about gladiator fights. Emperor **Constantine** tried to stop the fights in 325, but was not successful. Rome's population declined after the capital was moved. Emperor **Honorius** banned gladiator fights in 404. Prisoners still hunted wild animals for another 100 years. The last known fight was held in 523. The Colosseum was used for many different things after the battles ended. It became almost like a village at one point.

TODAY

The Roman Colosseum still stands for the most part. The southern side collapsed during a large **earthquake** in 847. The Colosseum is now in **ruins** due to natural aging and stone-robbers. It remains one the most popular tourist attractions in Rome with millions of visitors annually. The Colosseum was named a **Wonder of the Modern World** in 2007.

Name _____

Ancient Rome: COLOSSEUM

IDENTIFY: Use the word bank to identify each description.

velarium	Emperor's Box	entrances	Vespasian	trap doors
earthquake	Nero	hypogeum	Gate of Death	Emperor

	1. Person who paid for most events held at the colosseum
	2. Caused the southern side of the Colosseum to collapse
	3. Located under the Colosseum's floor to add scenery
	4. Emperor who began building the Colosseum
	5. The west exit of the Colosseum was known as this
	6. Retractable awning used for shade or rain protection
	7. Labyrinth of underground passages under the Colosseum
	8. There were 76 of these at the Colosseum
	9. Best seat in the Colosseum
	10. There is a statue of this Emperor outside of the Colosseum

MULTIPLE CHOICE: Choose the best answer.

11. Which of the following is **NOT** an event mentioned that was held in the Colosseum?
- A. Animal hunts
 - B. Re-enactments of famous battles
 - C. Coronation of Emperors
 - D. Mock sea battles
12. Which of the following is **NOT** true about the construction of Colosseum?
- A. The floor was wooden and covered with sand.
 - B. It was made from concrete, stone, and bricks.
 - C. It covered about 6 acres of land.
 - D. Four levels could be accessed by elevators.
13. Which is the correct **order** of seating from bottom to top?
- A. Senators, Ranking Government Officials, Women and Slaves
 - B. Women and Slaves, Senators, Ranking Government Officials
 - C. Ranking Government Officials, Women and Slaves, Former Gladiators
 - D. Former Gladiators, Senators, Women and Slaves
14. What was the **purpose** of the trap doors in the Colosseum?
- A. For gladiators to escape.
 - B. To add scenery.
 - C. For the Emperor to enter
 - D. For magic tricks.
15. What changed many Roman's feelings about gladiator fights?
- A. They got bored watching them.
 - B. They ran out of gladiators.
 - C. Christianity spread throughout the empire.
 - D. The capital of the empire was moved.
16. Around how long was the Colosseum actively used?
- A. 500 years
 - B. 1000 years
 - C. 100 years
 - D. 250 years

