

Ancient Rome: SLAVES

Slavery played a big part in the culture of Rome, like many other ancient civilizations. Much of the **labor** that built the Roman Empire was performed by slaves.

SLAVE POPULATION

Historians are not sure of the exact percentage of slaves living in ancient Rome, but they estimate it to be somewhere between 20 and 30 percent. As many as one third of the people in the early parts of the empire were likely slaves.

ENSLAVEMENT

Slaves were usually people **captured** in times of war from new lands conquered by the Roman Empire. Some slaves were bought from slave traders and pirates who captured foreigners and brought them to Rome. **Children** of slaves automatically became slaves. **Criminals** were sometimes sold into slavery. In some rare cases, people sold themselves into slavery to pay off their **debts**.

WORK

Slaves performed various tasks throughout the Roman Empire. Some did hard labor like working in Roman mines or on farms. Others worked skilled jobs like teaching or business accounting. A slave's job depended on their previous education and experiences. The two types of slaves were public and private. Public slaves, or **servi publici**, were owned by the Roman government. They may work on public building projects, for government officials, or in the emperor's mines. Private slaves, or **servi private**, were owned by individuals and worked jobs such as household servants, laborers on farms, and craftsmen.

TREATMENT

The way a slave was treated depended on his or her **owner**. Many slaves were beaten or worked to death, while others were treated almost as family. Slaves were considered valuable **property**, so it made sense to treat them well. Some owners even paid their slaves if they worked hard.

FREEDOM

Sometimes slaves were set free by their owner, known as "**manumission**." Other times slaves purchased their freedom. Once free, they were known as **freedmen** or **freedwomen**. Even though they were technically free, they still had the status of a "**freed slave**." They were considered Roman **citizens**, but were not allowed to hold public office. In addition, children of freed slaves could not hold public office.

REBELLIONS

Slaves of Rome banded together to **rebel** many times in the history of ancient Rome. The "**Servile Wars**" were three major rebellions. The Third Servile War is likely the most famous because it was led by **Spartacus**, a gladiator.



Name _____

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MATCHING: Match each term with its description.

1. _____ servi publici	A. Percentage of Roman population who were slaves
2. _____ servi private	B. Slaves set free by their owner
3. _____ property	C. These people were sometimes sold into slavery
4. _____ manumission	D. Slaves owned by individuals
5. _____ Spartacus	E. Some people sold themselves into slavery to pay off these
6. _____ 20-30	F. Slaves were considered this
7. _____ criminals	G. Gladiator known for leading the Third Servile War
8. _____ debts	H. Slaves owned by the Roman government

TRUE OR FALSE?: Place a check in the correct column.

STATEMENT	T	F
9. All Roman slaves were treated terribly by their owners.		
10. Freed slaves were not allowed to hold public office.		
11. All slaves worked in fields in the countryside.		
12. At one point 1/3rd of Rome's Empire were slaves.		
13. Slaves in Ancient Rome were too scared to rebel.		
14. Some slave owners paid their slaves if they worked hard.		
15. The Romans were the only civilization to have slaves.		
16. All Roman slaves were captured from other nations.		

MULTIPLE CHOICE: Choose the best answer.

17. Which of the following best completes the analogy?

Servi publici : _____ :: **Servi private** : **Household servant**

- A. Craftsmen
B. Farm Laborer
C. Work for Government Official
D. House Servant

18. Why did it **mainly** make sense for Romans to treat their slaves well?

- A. They did not want their slaves to rebel.
B. They cared about their feelings.
C. They were family members.
D. They were considered property.

19. What is the **least** likely way a person became a slave in Ancient Rome?

- A. They were captured in newly conquered lands.
B. They sold themselves into slavery to pay off debts.
C. They were captured in times of war.
D. They were bought from a slave trader.

