

Teacher Notes

The slave and the architect

Synopsis

Julia introduces Commodus the architect and his slave, Josephus. Commodus's new building project leads to a discussion between the two about the role of slaves in Rome.

Resources:

Comprehension:

Seven questions testing a variety of skills (retrieval, summarising, etc.) to check and reinforce learning from the animation.

Slavery in Ancient Rome:

Children research the answers to a variety of questions about slavery in Ancient Rome, including their rights, jobs, manumission, etc.

Hot-seating:

Children take it in turns to play either Commodus or Josephus and answer questions about their (character's) life.

Key questions to consider:

Why do you think slavery was so widespread in Roman times?

How might two slaves' lives be similar and different?

How did Roman citizens view slaves?

Why might it be hard to find sources that tell us about a slave's real experiences?

History curriculum objectives:

- Note connections, contrasts and trends over time.
- Regularly address and sometimes devise historically valid questions about change, cause, similarity and difference, and significance.
- Construct informed responses that involve thoughtful selection and organisation of relevant historical information.
- Understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources.
- NI: Some of the characteristics of past societies and distinctive features of life in the past.
- Welsh Progression step 3: I can describe and explain similarities and differences between people's lives both in the past and present.
- Welsh Progression step 3: I can use appropriate methods to gather information related to my enquiries and I am able to interpret the information obtained in the context of the enquiry question.
- SOC 2-01a: I can use primary and secondary sources selectively to research events in the past.

Cross-curricula objectives:

- Drama: Pupils should be able to adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role.

The slave and the architect – Comprehension

How much did slaves cost to buy?

What skills made a slave more expensive?

Write down three types of work that the animation says Roman slaves did.

In what ways is Josephus living a better life than most other slaves?

Explain what three different rooms in Commodus's bath house will be for.

Write a summary of the events of Spartacus's life.

What are two things which the animation says Roman slaves could not do?



The slave and the architect – Comprehension

How much did slaves cost to buy?

Twice a soldier's yearly wages, or more!

What skills made a slave more expensive?

The ability to read and write.

Write down three types of work that the animation says Roman slaves did.

Any three of the following: Working in mines / Farming / Cleaning / Serving food / Running a household / Buying necessary items / Guarding clothes at the baths / Keeping boilers going at the baths

In what ways is Josephus living a better life than most other slaves?

He helps to run his master's house, can spend his master's money on things the household needs, and is given a *peculium*, a payment he can save towards buying his freedom.

Explain what three different rooms in Commodus's bath house will be for.

Any three of the following: *Apodyterium* to get changed in / *Gymnasium* for exercise / *Caldarium* for heat / *Laconicum* for steam / *Tepidarium* for milder temperature / *Frigidarium* for a cold bath

Write a summary of the events of Spartacus's life.

He was a Roman soldier who deserted the army, so was made a slave. He raised an army and rebelled against Rome, nearly destroying the Roman Republic.

What are two things which the animation says Roman slaves could not do?

The animation says slaves could not use the facilities at a bath house or get married.



Slavery in Ancient Rome



"Slavery was, sadly, a huge part of Roman life. For most slaves, things were incredibly hard and unfair. There were some, however, who rose to a better, more influential or freer life. Use your research skills to fill in the fact file below and learn more about this side of Roman rule."

How many slaves were there in the Roman Empire?

(This changed throughout Roman history. Write a date and the number of slaves at that time, either as a total, a percentage of the population, or both.)

Find four different ways that people could become slaves in Ancient Rome.

- ---
- ---
- ---
- ---

Tick the correct boxes to show what rights or restrictions slaves lived with.

	Yes	No
Could slaves marry?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Could slaves start their own families?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Could slaves vote?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Could slaves own property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Were slaves protected from bad treatment by the law?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Could slaves ever become free?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

List ten jobs that Roman slaves did.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

How could slaves gain their freedom?

What rights did freed slaves get?

Research a famous Roman slave and complete the profile below.

What was their name?

When did they live?

What job did they do?

What are they famous for?

Hot-seating - Teacher Notes

Summary

A drama exercise designed to immerse children in the characters of the animation, that they may better understand life in Roman times.

Activity

If your pupils are unfamiliar with the concept of hot-seating, explain and demonstrate it for the class, with either yourself, a teaching assistant or a confident child in the hot seat. Whoever is in the hot seat takes on the persona of either Commodus the architect or Josephus, his slave. They are asked questions about their life, experiences, opinions, feelings, etc by everyone else and have to respond as the character.

When children are familiar with the idea of hot-seating, have them think of questions to ask people in the hot seat and note them down on the *Questions* sheet. Encourage them to think of plenty of interesting and unique questions which cover a variety of areas such as those listed above. Four question prompts are included to help get them started.

Display or give the children copies of the *Characters* sheet and recap what we find out about each character from the animation. This will help them to play the characters more fully.

Place the children in small groups (threes or fours). Each child gets a turn in the hot seat, pretending to be either Commodus or Josephus. In every round, the other children in the group ask the child in the hot seat questions from their sheets.

If there is time, you may wish to give every child a second turn, playing the character they did not play in the first round.

When the hot-seating is complete, you may wish to have a class discussion to explore the children's experiences and reinforce any helpful themes that arise. You may also wish to give the children a writing task immediately after the hot-seating (perhaps a diary entry or a personal letter) which gives them a chance to express themselves as one of the characters and record what life may have been like for them in Roman times.

Hot-seating – Characters



“If you’re going to imagine what it might be like to be Commodus or Josephus, you’ll need to remember lots of things about them! Here’s a handy sheet telling you everything we learned about them in the animation. Have fun pretending to be these characters when you get on the hot seat!”



Commodus

- He is an architect.
- He is an older, rich man.
- He has a new job designing a bath house.
- He does not seem bothered that slaves are not allowed in the baths, except to work.
- He thinks about the skills and cost of Josephus, more than Josephus’s feelings or hopes.
- He thinks Josephus should be thankful that he has a better life than other slaves.
- He thinks slave rebels are dangerous and wrong.
- He pays Josephus a *peculium*, so he can buy his freedom in a few years’ time.
- He will not let Josephus go free early to get married, because he needs him to work.



Josephus

- He is a slave.
- He is a younger, poor man.
- He has a better life than many slaves.
- He can spend Commodus’s money.
- He helps to run the household.
- He can read and write and therefore cost a lot of money.
- He is paid a *peculium*, so he will be able to buy his freedom in a few years’ time.
- He thinks it’s unfair how slaves are treated.
- He agrees with Spartacus.
- He became a slave because he was ‘in the wrong place at the wrong time’.
- He’s met someone he wants to marry, but cannot, because he is a slave.

Hot-seating - Questions



“Now, what questions are you going to come up to with to ask people when they get on the hot seat? Think about a variety of different parts of their character: their life experiences; their hopes and fears... Come up with a question for each of the first four boxes, then fill the last box with as many questions you can think of!”

Think of a question about daily life.

Think of a question about opinions.

Think of a question about hopes and dreams.

Think of a question about the relationships between characters.

Think of more questions. These could be about jobs, specific events, feelings, problems, fears, fairness, or anything else.
