

# ACTIVITY I: The Real Rome

REPRODUCIBLE MASTER

The 12-part series *Rome*, beginning August 28, 2005, on HBO, opens in 52 B.C. as Gaius Julius Caesar prepares to return to Rome, leading thousands of battle-hardened men and a populist agenda for social change. (Roman males had three parts to their names. Gaius was Caesar's personal name.) It is the story of war and brotherhood, of love and betrayal, of masters and slaves played out during epic times that saw the fall of a people's Republic and the creation of an Empire.

**Part A.** What was it like to live in ancient Rome? In the HBO series *Rome*, we witness the stark disparity between rich and poor. Research and compare the living conditions between the wealthy (e.g., Atia, the mother of Octavian and niece of Caesar), to those of the poor, for example, the soldier Vorenus and his wife Niobe. (While soldiers Vorenus and Pullo were mentioned in the Fifth Book of Caesar's account of his war in Gaul, their depiction in the series is a dramatization.) Consider, among other things, housing, food, water supply, and servile help. Use the lines below and the back of this sheet for your notes.

## Wealthy Romans

## Poor Romans

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Discuss how closely the above disparities parallel other ancient civilizations or America today.

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After viewing the series, why do you think there were such high numbers of poor and unemployed citizens in Rome? What steps did the government take to remedy the situation? Can you compare the conditions in Ancient Rome to present conditions in our modern world?



above:  
Julius Caesar and  
Mark Antony

below:  
Atia and Mark Antony



above:  
Pullo and Eirene

below:  
Niobe and Vorenus



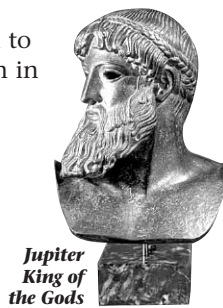
**Part B.** Research Roman religion and compare your research to how religion is portrayed in *Rome*. Was dramatic license taken in the series? Here are some suggested research topics:

- Beliefs
- Moral content
- Emotional content
- Relationship between religion and government
- Objective of religious ritual

On a separate sheet, explain how the role of religion today compares with religion's place in Roman society.



Bacchus  
God of Wine



Jupiter  
King of the Gods



Diana  
Goddess of the Moon



Apollo  
God of the Sun

**Part C.** During the existence of the Roman Republic, as it is portrayed in *Rome*, the army gradually changed from a militia loyal to the state to a professional army loyal to its commander. After reviewing the causes and effects of this transformation of the Roman army, discuss the following:

**\*A newly commissioned second lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps swears an oath of loyalty to the Constitution. What might be the effect if the object of that oath was not the Constitution, but the U.S. president personally?**

**\*World War II was fought with a draft army. The war in Iraq is being fought by a professional/volunteer army. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?**

**TO SEE THE CITY OF ANCIENT ROME PORTRAYED IN A WAY THAT'S NEVER BEEN DONE BEFORE, DON'T MISS THE 12-EPIISODE HBO SERIES *ROME*, BEGINNING SUNDAY, AUGUST 28 AT 9PM/8C.**

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# ACTIVITY II: A Question of Class

REPRODUCIBLE MASTER

As you see powerfully portrayed in the new HBO series *Rome*, the class system was the basis of Roman life, politics and interpersonal relationships.



Mark Antony and Caesar

**Part A.** The nobles controlled both the government and the military. After researching and reviewing the historical development of this class, outline the traditional career path of a young noble aspiring to a political career. Use the space below and the back of this sheet for your notes.

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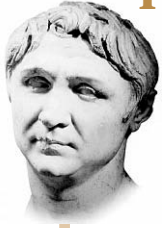
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## Pompey

Compare the careers of Pompey and Caesar:

## Caesar




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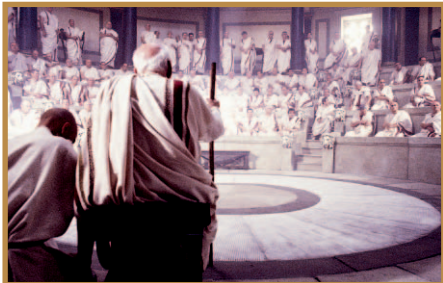
If you used a crystal ball in 60 B.C., which of these two powerful individuals would you predict would overthrow the state? Why?

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**Part B.** Cicero was a “new man,” the first member of his family to attain high political office in Rome. Using separate paper, do a case study of this man, researching his family background, his progression up the political ladder and his political tactics and loyalties. Use your research to write a brief biography of his life. Compare the results of your research with the portrait of Cicero presented in *Rome*.



**Part C.** Climbing the political ladder (the *cursus honorum*) in ancient Rome meant starting at the bottom as a magistrate, a position sought by Vorenus in *Rome*. Read portions of *The Handbook of Campaigning for Office (COMMENTARIOLUM PETITIONIS)* by Quintus Cicero, the less famous young brother of Marcus Tullius Cicero, written to his brother who was running for consul early in 63 B.C.

Here is some of his advice:

*\*One has great need of a flattering manner, which, wrong and discreditable though it may be in other walks of life, is indispensable in seeking office.*

*\*Human nature being what it is, all men prefer a false promise to a flat refusal.*

Find other examples and compare them to today’s political practices.

As seemingly unscrupulous as his advice seems, why do you think it applies to politics today?




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# ACTIVITY III: A Walking Tour of Rome

REPRODUCIBLE MASTER

Unparalleled for a realistic look at Roman life, society and the physical environment, HBO's 12-part series *Rome* is a story of love and betrayal, husbands and wives, power and corruption. Here is some amazing information from Jonathan Stamp, HBO's historical consultant. See it take life on the screen in HBO's *Rome*, beginning August 28th at 9PM/8C.

## Rome—the customs and traditions

- The male head of the family (paterfamilias) had absolute authority in the house, even the authority to kill his children.
- Women could not hold political office, but they were able to acquire and dispose of property as they wished, making some women quite wealthy.
- Women were given a dowry by their fathers (a share of his estate) when they married. If they divorced, which was common, women returned to their father's home with the dowry which was held in expectation of her marrying again.
- Undertakers hired themselves out as torturers because they knew human anatomy, thus understanding the most vulnerable torture points.
- As a rule, slaves were tortured before they were allowed to present testimony in court. Most slaves lived in conditions of trust alongside their masters, sometimes even running their master's financial affairs. They were sometimes freed. Many of these slaves even got rich.
- Religion was a political activity and priests did not have a divine calling. Religion protected the state.
  - Adultery was acceptable if performed by men and almost acceptable if performed by women if it was done discreetly. This way of thinking applied more to the upper classes.
  - Money had the same appeal in ancient Rome as it does today. An inscription on the walls of Pompeii bore the Latin words *salve lucrum* – Welcome Profit.



## Rome—the smells and noises

- Though buildings and temples were painted in rich, lush hues, and the city was vividly alive, most of Rome was crowded and dirty. Seven- and 8-story tenements were commonplace and crammed with people.
- Rome was a cosmopolitan city where people spoke Italian, Greek, Aramaic and several different Italic dialects. Streets were so crowded that wagons could only move at night. The noise from the streets was unbearable—with the squeaky wheels of wooden carts, and people shouting and screaming. Uninterrupted sleep was a luxury for the rich who lived in houses big enough to escape the noise.

## Rome—the pomp and circumstance

- Triumphant generals, like Caesar, rode into Rome with dyed red faces, the votive color of the god Jupiter.
- On his day of triumph, Caesar carried a wreath of laurel—the symbol of victory—in his right hand. In his left, he carried an ivory scepter with an eagle at the top, borrowed from the temple of Jupiter, symbolizing victory in war.
- When great crowds of people came to the Forum for occasions such as Triumphs or great legal trials, onlookers sometimes fell to their death from the top section of the Basilica or were crushed to death by the enormous crowd.

- As part of the triumphal procession, the defeated enemy general was paraded through the streets. Following Caesar's triumphant procession there were festivals and feasts for all the people of Rome.

## Rome—the arena and the gladiators

- In Latin, the word for sand is *harena*. Sand covered the arena floor because it gave the best traction and soaked up blood.
- Gladiators were the rock stars of the day. They sold their sweat- and blood-soaked bits of clothing to the highest bidder, usually a woman.
- Most gladiators were either slaves or prisoners of war but some were contract gladiators, joining up voluntarily because of the glamour of the job and the worship of the crowd.
- Though gladiators were adored in the arena, on the outside they were considered outcasts of society. They couldn't even go to a gladiator contest they weren't in.
- Contrary to belief, only 6 or 7 percent of gladiator contests ended in death. Gladiators were a commodity, expensive to train, and therefore not expendable.
- The Romans sent condemned criminals into the arena blindfolded or with helmets lacking eyeholes. They faced an army of trained soldiers who cut off heads and limbs.



Servilia



Pullo

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