Lesson One: Introduction—Studying Rome via Primary Sources and Artifacts (Symbols and Monuments)

**Lesson Overview**: Introduce the essential question for the week and briefly explain the end of week project. Ask students to draw a symbol and use student symbols to introduce the concept of using primary sources and monuments as tools for studying the ancient Romans. Define essential vocabulary for the week. Briefly explain the three paradigms that will be used in the next three days to examine Roman history, then place students in groups and lead them in a discussion of primary source and artifact examples about Roman gladiator games. Emphasize that this will be the method employed in the next three days to examine the three paradigms. Finally, conclude the lesson by reemphasizing the week’s essential question and objectives, the three paradigms, and the upcoming final assessment project.

This lesson satisfies the following Common Core & Career Readiness Objectives for grades 6-12:

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1**
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2**
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

**Objectives**: The student will…

- explain how symbols and monuments contribute to the cultural identities of nations.
- define paradigm, transition, monument, symbol, and pagan.
- explain the three Roman history paradigms shifts of Republic to Empire, Pagan to Christian, and Rome to British and American imaginations.
A. Introduce Essential Question (3 minutes):

“For the next five days we are going to discuss Roman history by examining primary sources, monuments, and some symbols. In studying these items, we are going to examine the following essential question:

**How much has Rome, as a world intellectual center, contributed to emerging national and global identities of different peoples over time?**

You need to write this question down in your notebook, as it will be the idea that guides our lessons and discussions this week.”

**Important Note:** Students will be completing a final project assessment after the next four days of lessons are finished.

B. Personal Symbol Activity (5 minutes):

Students will be asked to draw a symbol or monument that they like. It can be any symbol they want. They will be given 3 minutes to accomplish this task. Students will then be asked to share their symbol and answer some of the following questions:

1. What is your symbol, and why did you choose it?
2. Do you have a personal connection to your symbol?
3. Describe in one brief sentence what this symbol represents to you.

Connect the examples discussed in class with ancient Rome (i.e., Just as we have our national and local symbols and monuments, so did Rome—and they had MANY!). Focus attention on symbols that have cultural significance in our world and use them as segues to discuss how symbols/monuments will be used to discuss Roman history in the following three days. **This would be a great time to once again emphasize the essential question and final project.**

C. Essential Vocabulary (10 minutes):

In order to understand the next three days lessons, students will need a firm grasp on the following vocabulary. Have them write the following words down on flash cards or in regular class notes:
Paradigm: an example serving as a model; pattern; a framework containing the basic assumptions, ways of thinking, and methodology that are commonly accepted by members of a scientific community. (Example: many scientists believe in the idea of evolution as a paradigm through which to examine human development.) For our class, our paradigms are serving as models of how to approach Roman history.

Transition: movement, passage, or change from one position to another; change. (Example: Many historians see the United States as moving from an age of Industry into an age of Information/Technology).

Monument: something erected in memory of a person or event, such as a building, pillar, statue, etc. (Example: the Washington Monument or WWII monument in Washington DC). Any object surviving from the past and is regarded with historical or archaeological importance. (Example: the death mask of King Tutankhamen)

Symbol: something used for or regarded as representing something else; a material object representing something, often something immaterial (intangible--not touchable); emblem, token, or sign. (Example: The Star of David is the international symbol of Judaism.)

Pagan: one of a people or community observing a polytheistic religion, or, a person who is not a Christian. (Example: The ancient Greeks and Romans practiced a pagan religion by worshipping many gods and goddesses.)

D. Brief Overview of the next three days lessons (5 minutes):

“In the following three days we will be studying Roman history via three main paradigms. These paradigms are:

- the shift from Roman Republic to Roman Empire
- the shift from pagan Rome to Christian Rome
- the way in which Roman history has influenced British and American culture”

Take only a couple minutes to summarize each paradigm. It is recommended that it be very brief and general, with only a few specific details included. Consult the following 3 days of lessons for the few specific details you wish to discuss.
E. Primary Source/Monument or Symbol Analysis Example (27 minutes):

“For each of our three paradigms, we are going to analyze a primary source from that period and an accompanying symbol or monument. Today we're going to practice this with a primary source and symbol of which most of you will likely be familiar. Today’s topic are the Roman gladiator games.”

At this point, break the class into groups of four or five students. Groups will read the primary source and answer the discussion questions (handout 1).

Once groups have finished their primary source analysis, distribute the gladiator mosaic picture and have each group answer the discussion questions for it (handout 2).

Once all groups have completed their discussion questions, solicit comments and guide the students through a discussion of the role of Roman gladiators in their culture. A few suggested items for discussion are included below:

- Death was something more immediate and "every day" to the Romans.
- Romans had different views about the rights and dignity of animals.
- The games were very political, often sponsored (paid for) by the wealthy seeking political office.
- The games were also a way of controlling the masses: keep them distracted from the ills of society with cheap food and entertainment.
- While popular, the gladiator games weren't approved by all.
- Gladiator games were a "big business" industry--many businessmen owned slaves that were gladiators and became wealthy.
- Many gladiators were much like today's popular professional athletes.

F. Objective Review and Wrap-Up (5 minutes):

When the above discussion is over, remind students that for each of the three paradigms they will be analyzing primary sources and images just as they did today.

Once again, tie in the essential question to the discussion and review the objectives for the lesson.
Remind students of their final project coming up at the end of the week.

Solicit any further questions and wrap it up.
Introduction Lesson: Handout 1

**Essential Question:**

*How much has Rome, as a world intellectual center, contributed to emerging national and global identities of different peoples over time?*

Written by Cicero

“Just look at the gladiators, they are either criminals or foreigners, and consider all they have been through! Consider the gladiators who are well-disciplined that prefer to be hit than shamefully avoid it! How often do we talk about how gladiators only want to satisfy their master or the people! Even when they are covered with wounds they send a messenger to their master to ask what he wants. If the gladiators satisfy their master, they are happy to die. How often do average gladiators show any sign of pain on his face? Do any of the gladiators show any shame, either in victory or defeat? And do any gladiators, when they fall, cower away when they are ordered to be killed?”

Discussion Questions:

1. Who wrote this source?

2. Who are the gladiators according to the author?

3. How does Cicero feel about the gladiators?

4. What excerpts from the paragraph illustrate the author’s feelings?

5. What do the author’s comments on gladiators say about Roman culture and values?
Introduction Lesson: Handout 1 (Answer Key)

Written by Cicero:

“Just look at the gladiators, they are either criminals or foreigners, and consider all they have been through! Consider the gladiators who are well-disciplined that prefer to be hit than shamefully avoid it! How often do we talk about how gladiators only want to satisfy their master or the people! Even when they are covered with wounds they send a messenger to their master to ask what he wants. If the gladiators satisfy their master, they are happy to die. How often do average gladiators show any sign of pain on his face? Do any of the gladiators show any shame, either in victory or defeat? And do any gladiators, when they fall, cower away when they are ordered to be killed?”

Discussion Questions:

1. Who wrote this source?

Cicero

2. Who are the gladiators according to the author?

debased men or foreigners

3. How does Cicero feel about the gladiators?

He’s praising them for their bravery, honor, and loyalty.

4. What excerpts from the paragraph illustrate the author’s feelings?

He describes them as, “well disciplined; prefer to be hit than shamefully avoid it; they consider nothing but the satisfaction of their master or the people (even while covered with wounds); they are “happy to die”; they are emotionless about dying (How often do average gladiators show any sign of pain on his face? Do any of the gladiators show any shame, either in victory or defeat?)

5. What does the author’s comments on gladiators say about Roman culture and values?

Bravery is very important to them. Death is not really a big deal. Gladiators possessed traits that the Romans sought to emulate. The Romans admire the traits of the ideal soldier in battle.
Essential Question: How much has Rome, as a world intellectual center, contributed to emerging national and global identities of different peoples over time?

1. TYPE OF ARTIFACT: Describe the material from which it was made: bone, pottery, metal, wood, stone, leather, glass, paper, cardboard, cotton, plastic, other material.

2. SPECIAL QUALITIES OF THE ARTIFACT: Describe how it looks: shape, color, texture, size, weight, movable parts, anything printed, stamped or written on it.

3.USES OF THE ARTIFACT: What might it have been used for? Who might have used it? Where might it have been used? When might it have been used?

4. WHAT DOES THE ARTIFACT TELL US? What does it tell us about technology of the time in which it was made and used? What does it tell us about the life and times of the people who made it and used it? Can you name a similar item today?
1. **TYPE OF ARTIFACT:** Describe the material from which it was made: bone, pottery, metal, wood, stone, leather, glass, paper, cardboard, cotton, plastic, other material.

   *It appears to be made of stone, perhaps marble.*

2. **SPECIAL QUALITIES OF THE ARTIFACT:** Describe how it looks: shape, color, texture, size, weight, movable parts, anything printed, stamped or written on it.

   *Somewhat rectangular; beige; smooth texture overall (other than cracks); size is hard to tell—perhaps a 2’ X 3’; likely very heavy (70-100 lbs. likely); no moveable parts; no printing or stamping; shows gladiators fighting a lion and maybe a cougar; it shows what appears to be people watching from above (upper left corner); the lion might be coming through a gate of some kind; also has what appears be a god or emperor statue (upper right corner); has a decorative border along the top*

3. **USES OF THE ARTIFACT:** What might it have been used for? Who might have used it? Where might it have been used? When might it have been used?

   *Could have been an advertisement for gladiator games; could have been a monument to some gladiators; perhaps a motivational picture for a gladiator school; probably made during the Republic or early Empire period*
4. WHAT DOES THE ARTIFACT TELL US? What does it tell us about technology of the time in which it was made and used? What does it tell us about the life and times of the people who made it and used it? Can you name a similar item today?

*It doesn’t say much about technology other than it used basic military equipment (sword & shield); violence and death were a normal part of every day life; these contests were a very visible, common part of their culture; the life of animals weren’t seen as precious as they are today; a similar item today might be an article in the newspaper about a sporting event or an advertisement for a professional sports team*

You might close the analysis section by telling them about the artifact:

**Roman civilization, Relief portraying gladiators and lions fighting in circus**

**Description**

Roman civilization, 1st century A.D. Relief portraying a gladiators and lions' fight in the circus. Artwork-location: Rome, Museo Nazionale Romano (National Roman Museum, Archaeological Museum) Terme Di Diocleziano (Baths Of Diocletian)

The image came from the following website:

http://www.bridgemanimages.com/en-GB/search?filter_text=kw%3Amammals&original_filter_text=kw%3Amammals&filter_searchoption_id=2&sort_order=best_relevance&item_num=1