

# THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII

THE IMMERSIVE EXHIBITION

TEACHING GUIDE

SECONDARY





# PREPARE YOUR VISIT

Welcome to the last days of Pompeii, the immersive exhibition. You will discover not only curious details about life in ancient Rome but you can also understand how nature acts in our environment and how to act when faced by certain disasters.

Pompeii and Herculaneum, because there were actually two cities that were covered up by the ashes of the volcano, are located on the coast of the Gulf of Naples, south of the Italian Peninsula (Italy). A few kilometres from where these cities were erected more than 2,000 years ago, Vesuvius appears. This volcano erupted in around October of the year 79 CE, leading to the disappearance of Pompeii and Herculaneum under the ashes of the volcano.



*The streets of Pompeii today, with Mount Vesuvius in the background.*

## WHERE IS POMPEII?



*In the south of Italy there lies the Gulf of Naples, where Pompeii and the Vesuvius volcano can be found*

# HISTORY OF ROME



*The Capitoline wolf with Romulus and Remus.*

The story of Rome begins with a legend. It is said that the city was founded by two brothers, Romulus and Remus in 753 BCE. These brothers were raised by a wolf, which we call the Capitoline She-wolf. When

they became older, the brothers had a fight, which Romulus won and became the first king of the future city of Rome.

In 509 BCE, two centuries after its foundation and governance by various monarchs, the inhabitants of Rome no longer wanted a monarchy. And so the Roman Republic arose, a government system in which there are no monarchs.

In the Roman Republic system, the Government was led



*SPQR are the acronym of Senatus Populusque Romanus which means 'the Senate and the Roman people'. It appeared on the battle standards of the legion.*

by two consuls, who were elected every year. It is then that the Senate emerged, an institution in which the important people of the city argued about how to run it.

Rome had a very powerful army with which the city began to spread not only through the Italian peninsula, but beyond the borders of the modern-day Italy. As they progressed in the conquest of Europe and North Africa, they built what are known as Roman roads to be able to march faster and reach distant places.



One of the most famous Roman rulers was Julius Caesar who lived in the 1st century before the common era. He was a brilliant general who conquered many lands for Rome. But he wanted more power too. Some people loved him for his achievements, whilst others feared that he would become too powerful, becoming virtually one of the ancient monarchs who were hated at the start of the Republic. Julius Caesar imposed a dictatorship as the government and to get rid of him, some of his closest people betrayed him and he was assassinated in 44 BCE.

*The great Roman legion made the empire grow.*



"The death of Caesar" by the painter Vincenzo Camuccini.

After Caesar's time, there were many struggles for power. Finally, Octavian Augustus became the first Roman emperor, marking the beginning of the Roman Empire in 27 BCE. Under the emperors, Rome spread far and wide, becoming more powerful.



Statue of Augustus, the first emperor of Rome.

Over time, things began to get tricky for Rome. The empire was so vast that it was difficult to control (Europe, Africa and the Middle East). There were external and internal attacks. Some emperors tried to solve them, whilst others were not particularly good rulers.



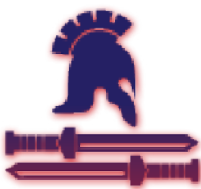
The Constantine emperor surrounded by saints in an icon from the Byzantine Empire.

A great change occurred when an emperor named Constantine decided to transfer the capital of Rome to a new city called Constantinople (now called Istanbul in Türkiye). The Empire was divided into two parts: the Western Roman Empire (with Rome) and the Eastern Roman Empire (with Constantinople).

Unfortunately, the Western Roman Empire had to deal with many problems. In the year 476 C.E., an invasive group broke through the borders of the empire. They were the so called barbarians and their incursion spelled the end of the Western Roman Empire. However, the Eastern Roman Empire, also known as the Byzantine Empire, was to continue for another 1,000 years until the Middle Ages.

Although the Western Roman Empire fell, the history of Rome did not end there. Its ideas, art and even Latin (its mother tongue) lived on, forming the basis for many things we see and do today.





# TIMELINE

## ANCIENT ROME



218 BCE ARRIVAL OF ROME  
in Hispania



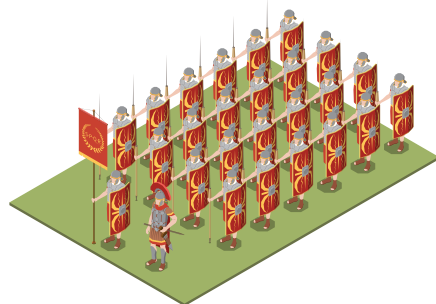
39 BCE DEATH OF CLEOPATRA  
AND MARK ANTONY



79 C.E. DESTRUCTION OF POMPEII  
owing to the eruption of Vesuvius



117 C.E. GREAT EXPANSION  
of Rome with Emperor  
Trajan



395 C.E. DIVISION OF THE EMPIRE  
by Theodosius.  
The Roman Eastern  
Empire emerged



753 BCE FOUNDATION OF ROME  
with Romulus and Remus



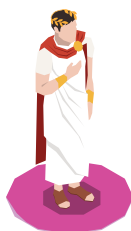
509 BCE CREATION OF THE REPUBLIC



27 BCE CREATION OF THE EMPIRE  
coronation of Augustus



46-44 BCE CAESAR'S DICTATORSHIP  
until his death



475 C.E. INVASION OF THE BARBARIANS  
Fall of the Western Empire



753 BCE

509 BCE

27 BCE

476 C.E.

MONARCHY

REPUBLIC

EMPIRE

# HOW DOES A VOLCANO WORK?

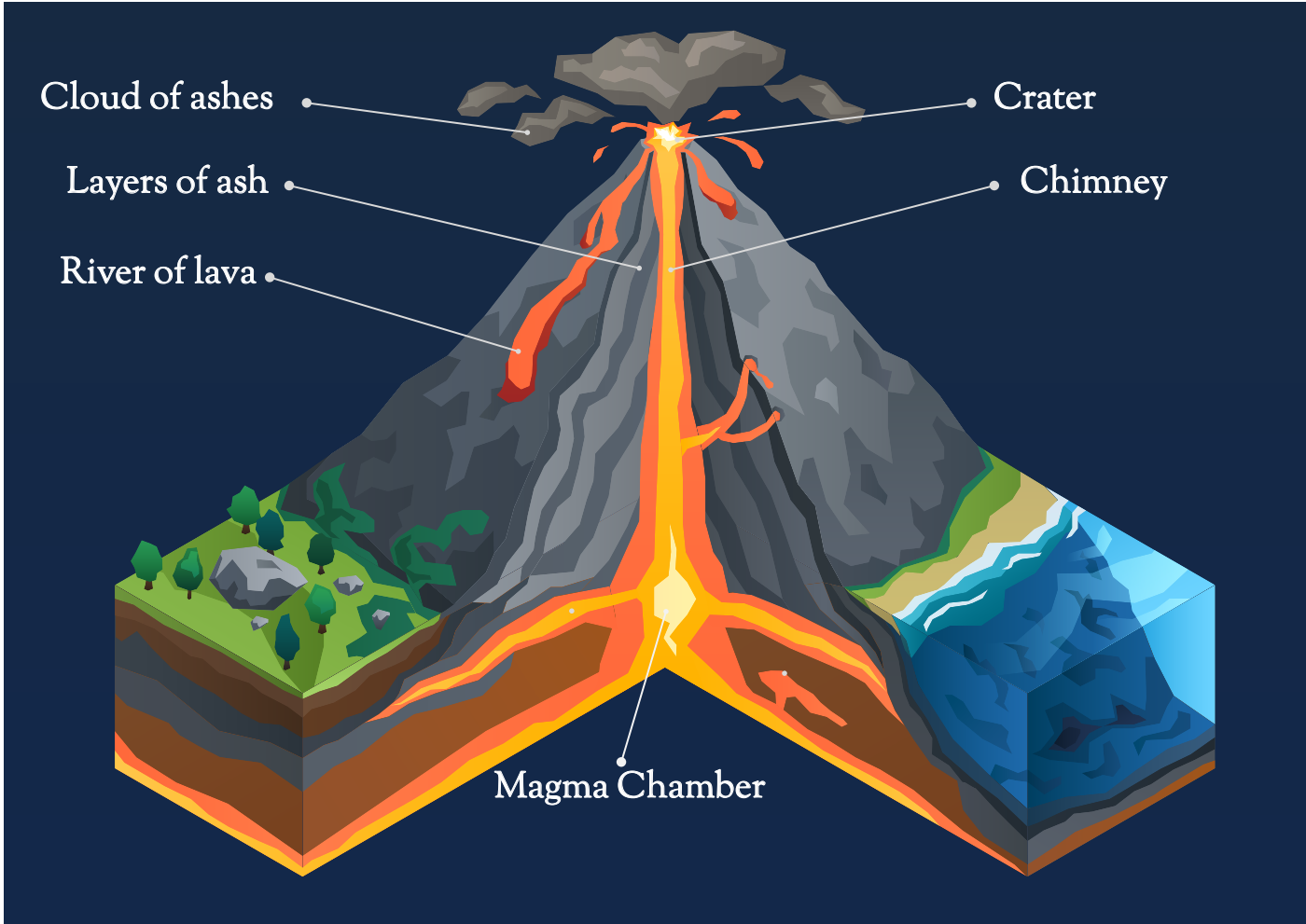


*The god Vulcan working in his forge.*

One of the most important gods of ancient Rome was Vulcan, God of fire. He was blamed for the natural disasters in which flames played a special role. All fire-related works, such as steelworks and preparation of metals with large furnaces, were linked to this God. It is from his name that our volcano derives, a mountain that spits fire.

There are four main parts of a volcano. Firstly, in the deepest area is the magma chamber where all the materials that will go to the surface are located. When the magma is heated, the volcano erupts and the materials ascend through the chimney and flow into the crater, the outer hole of the volcano. The eruptions are always violent and are accompanied by ashes, gases, rocks and lava. When the crater overflows, they form a mountain, the so -called volcanic cone. This mountain in the case of Pompeii is the Vesuvius.

Lava is the magma that comes out of the volcano. It does so at high temperatures and when it cools down, it forms types of rock that we call igneous such as diorite, granite or basalt.



*The parts of a volcano.*

A volcano can be on the earth's surface or even under the waters of the oceans. As we can see, this hole connects the surface of our planet with its interior.

On many occasions, before the volcano erupts, earthquakes occur in the area. This tells us that plates forming the earth's surface are moving and that by moving, they make the volcano erupt.

Before the expulsion of the lava, the volcano launches the so -called pyroclastic flow. This is a huge cloud formed by hot gases and stones which sweep or set on fire everything that gets in its way. Hence, the city of Pompeii was destroyed and covered up by the ashes launched by the Vesuvius in said pyroclastic flow.



# VOLCANO ERUPTION STAGES



1. Sleeping volcano



2. The volcano awakens



3. Gases come out



4. Magma ascends



5. The volcano erupts



6. Rivers of lava

## WHAT HAPPENED IN POMPEII?

Although many Romans were wise and science in the 1st century was certainly not very advanced, it is no less true that at that time nothing was known about volcanoes. They didn't even know that the huge mountain that arose next to Pompeii was actually a volcano. Shortly before the destruction of the city in the month of October 79 CE, Vesuvius, which is the name of the volcano, had given signs that could have worried the inhabitants of the city. But this was not the case.

Almost twenty years before, the area had suffered several earthquakes that practically destroyed Pompeii. Some authors like Tacitus tell us about it. We know that several houses were still being repaired when Vesuvius erupted.



*Pompeii and Herculaneum were very close to Vesuvius.*



Contrary to what many believe, the city was not under the lava but rather under the ashes and that which scientists call pyroclastic material, in other words, a mixture of gases, stones and ashes that were spit out by the volcano.



*The ruins of Pompeii, with Vesuvius in the background.*



*Decoration in one of the houses of the city.*

The city of Herculaneum, closer to the volcano, was buried by a layer of almost 15 metres of ashes, the size of a five-storey building. As regards Herculaneum today, we know barely 5% of that which this material conceals. By contrast, Pompeii, further away from Vesuvius, was buried under 7 metres of ashes.



*The streets of Pompeii.*

The materials cast out by the volcano, which were terribly hot, ended up drowning the Pompeiians whilst their houses began to catch fire at a stunning speed.



*The Vesuvius Crater*

Only a few lucky ones were able to save their lives, fleeing by boat through the port of the bay. But the majority suffered the action of nature, watching as the ashes and fire razed everything to the ground until Pompeii was rediscovered just three centuries ago.



# A SPANIARD DISCOVERS POMPEII



Charles III of Spain and VII of Naples.

The human being's curiosity about one of the oldest times in history did not arise just a few years ago. The tomb of Tutankhamun was discovered a hundred years ago and this revived interest in everything ancient. We can see it in the fashion, furniture, architecture etc.

Something similar happened three hundred years ago in the 18th century, when the world of ancient Rome became fashionable throughout Europe. Monarchs wished to put up in their palaces

statues of emperors, reliefs with mythological scenes, including paintings of the houses of the wealthy from ancient times etc.

Europe's interest in ancient Rome can largely be put down to the Spanish king Charles III (1716-1788). Before he was King of Spain, he was King of Naples in Italy, being known as Charles VII. When he was barely twenty-two years old, he sent one of his most important engineers and military officers, Roque Joaquín de Alcubierre, born in Saragossa, to build a palace near Vesuvius. Alcubierre soon found the ruins of Herculaneum's lost theatre and of Pompeii. This area had already been known for a long time since it was no surprise that fragments of columns and statues appeared in its soil full of ashes.



Painting about the time of discovery.

In 1748 Alcubierre pressed the young Charles VII of Naples to start excavations in the area. Once the monarch gave him permission, the Saragossan used his knowledge as an engineer, aided by a small gang of workers, to remove large amounts of earth. Hearsay has it that

suggests he was a destroyer of heritage and nothing more than a treasure hunter. But this is completely false. On the contrary, this engineer should be regarded as a pioneer of archaeology as he deployed working methods that had never been used before. He made plans, documented the findings and used engineering techniques to prevent the buildings from collapsing.



Interior of a villa in Pompeii.



# WHAT IS YET TO BE DISCOVERED



In archaeology, when we discover a closed place that has remained without being touched for thousands of years, we usually call it a time capsule. The tomb of Tutankhamun to which we dedicated the previous immersive exhibition, is a good example of this. The Pharaoh's tomb remained without anyone touching

anything in it for almost 3,500 years. With Pompeii something similar happened. No one has walked through its streets nor entered its houses for the last 2,000 years. As it was covered by the ashes, the city was preserved exactly as it was at the time of the volcano's eruption in 79 CE.

When Roque Joaquín Alcubierre found the remains of Pompeii at that time, we should recall that this was in 1748 and archaeology as a scientific discipline did not exist. The importance of objects focused only on the value of the pieces as decorative elements in the palaces of kings or nobles of the 18th century.



However, did you know that the true treasure at the foot of Vesuvius is not the city of Pompeii but rather that of Herculaneum? Archaeologists are now totally focused on this city. Pompeii is the most famous, but Herculaneum, closer to the volcano and under a greater number of metres and tonnes of ashes, is still yet to be discovered.

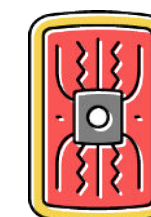


But surely you must be wondering. Why hasn't it been excavated if we know that there is a city waiting for us?



The answer is simple. Archaeology is a working technique which requires a lot of patience and a precise methodology to destroy as little as possible. It's not about moving tonnes of ashes from here to there.

You have to do it in a methodological way, documenting everything that moves, what appears and studying it and then publishing it so we can all understand it.



# WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO SEE AT THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII EXHIBITION?

“The last days of Pompeii” is the title of a nineteenth-century novel by an English author named Edward G. Bulwer Lytton. This London author is one of the most important romantic writers who masterfully described the life of a series of people just before the Vesuvius disaster.



a series of panels where you'll find all the information you'll need in order to be able to situate yourself chronologically and spatially. At the same time, you can find out the basic details of the Roman culture of this era, almost 2,000 years ago.

We then go to a space where you will see authentic pieces of contemporary Roman culture about the destruction of Pompeii and the reconstruction of the remains of some of the people which have reached us at the archaeological site.



This new immersive exhibition aims to make you the protagonist of everything that was lived in this Roman city of the late 1st century of the Common Era.

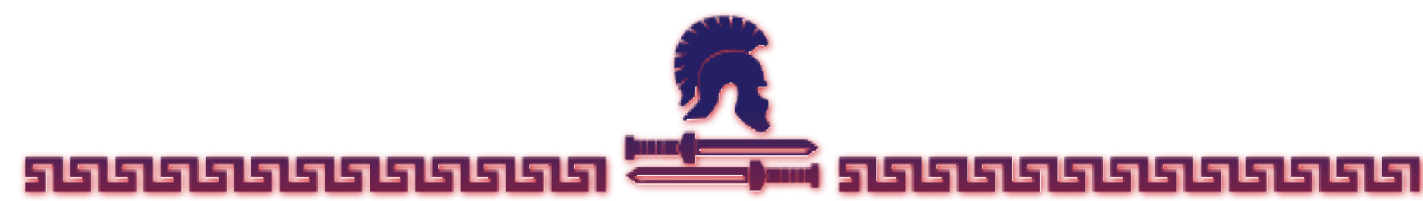
The sample begins with



letters about his experience in those times, before having been lucky enough to flee with his mother.

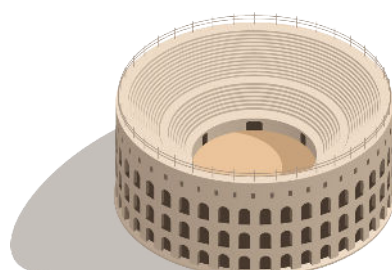
The metaverse zone will undoubtedly amaze you. You will walk through the Roman village of Licinia and Marco, two wealthy Pompeiian merchants. The exhibition ends with the virtual reality section. You will go in a chariot to the city amphitheatre and participate in a fight between gladiators and in a naumachia, a spectacular battle between boats that was represented at that time in the amphitheatres by filling the entire enclosure with water.





# DICTIONARY OF TERMS

**AMPHITHEATRE:** This is a huge building where shows of gladiator combats or naumachias (naval battles) were carried out. The most famous of all is the Rome Colosseum.



**ATRIUM:** This is the first courtyard of a *domus* or Roman house. In its centre, the atrium had a space that collected the rain which was called impluvium.

**CHARIOTEER:** This was the person who drove the chariots. Charioteers were like racing car drivers, but instead of cars, they drove carts with horses. They also put on a helmet and raced very fast on large tracks.

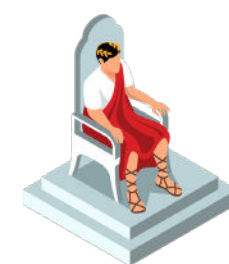
**CAVE CANEM:** *Cave Canem* is a Latin phrase which means “beware of the dog.” We still use this phrase when we want to warn about a dog that might bark or jump.

**CIRCUS:** This is an elongated building intended for horse-pulled chariot races.



**CHARIOT:** A chariot is like an old car pulled by four horses. People in Rome used it for racing at parties. It was like car races, but with horses!

**DOMUS:** A *Domus* is what the houses were called in ancient Rome. Some were large and luxurious and rich people lived there.



**EMPEROR:** He was the supreme head of ancient Rome. He made important decisions and everyone listened to him. As if he were a king who wore a special crown and lived in a palace.

**FORUM:** The forum was the place where the life of the ancient Roman cities was developed. There were the government buildings, the markets, the temple ... very similar to the main square of our cities and towns.

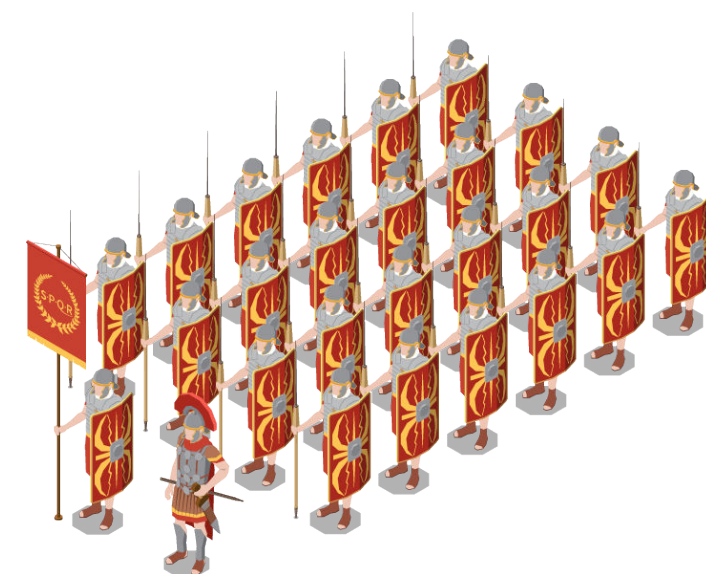
**GLADIATOR:** A gladiator was a fighter in ancient Rome. They put on armour and fought in a large facility called an amphitheatre. Sometimes they fought against other gladiators or animals. It was a show which everyone went to see.



**JUPITER:** God of heaven, the main divinity of the Roman gods and the father of human beings. Its symbols are the eagle, ray and sceptre.

**LAES:** They are guardian deities. Their origin is unknown, but they were related with the protection of the house, the family, the fields of cultivation and fostered fertility.

**LEGIONNAIRE:** The legionnaires were the soldiers of ancient Rome. They wore special armour and carried a large shield. The Roman Army was called the Legion and it helped protect and expand the territory of the State.





**LYRE:** This is a musical instrument with ropes which they played with their fingers to make music. It's like a small U-shaped guitar.

**LUCERNA:** This was a lamp in ancient Rome. It was small, ceramic and filled with oil to provide light. People lit it at night to see in the dark. It was like our flashlights but instead of batteries they used oil.

**MARS:** He is the god of war, violence, passion and sexuality. He is always represented as a soldier with armour.

**NEPTUNE:** God of the seas and oceans. He was identified with earthquakes, so he played an important role in that which Pompeii lived through.

**PATRICIAN:** The "Patricians" were important people in ancient Rome. They were the heads or leaders of the city. They ran the neighbourhood.

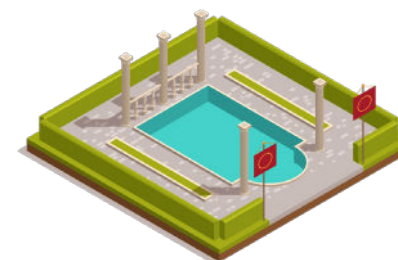
**PERISTYLIUM:** The `peristylum, literally "surrounded by columns", is the main courtyard of the Roman house. It usually had a landscaped area and fountains.



**PLUTO:** He is the God of the underworld, the Lord of the dead. As he lived under the earth's surface where the mines of all precious metals and jewels are to be found, he was believed to be a very wealthy God.

**ROMULUS AND REMUS:** They were twins who were raised by a she-wolf and Roman mythology has it that they were the founders of Rome in 753 BCE.

**TOGA:** A Roman toga was like a large blanket that people in ancient Rome wore over their clothes. Important people used it to show that they were respected.



**THERMAE:** They are the hot and cold water baths that in ancient Rome became so popular. There were public ones, but the wealthiest people had private bathrooms in their homes.

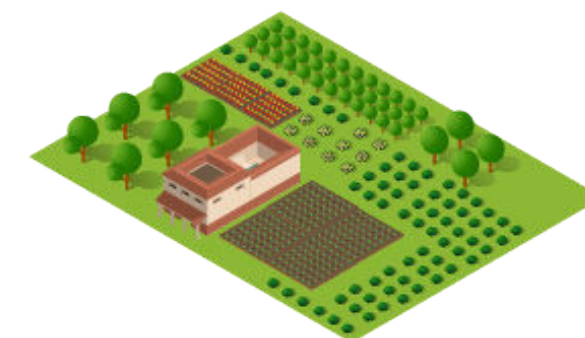
**TERRA SIGILLATA:** This means "sealed earth." It is a special type of bright red ceramics that was used in ancient Rome to make dishes, vessels etc.



**TRICLINIUM:** This is the room where the triclinares are, in other words, the couches where the owners of a house rest. It is one of the main rooms for eating and it was like a dining room in a modern house.

**VENUS:** Goddess of love, beauty and fertility and many festivals were devoted to her. She was the wife of the god Vulcan and always used to be portrayed naked.

**VILLA:** This was a huge farm where all kinds of agricultural and livestock foods were produced. Part of it was used for the owner's residence.



**VULCAN:** God of fire and the creation of metals, so important in the cultures of the ancient world. In addition, it is the pattern for all the trades where fire plays an important role. In other words, chefs, bakers, blacksmiths etc.





# ACTIVITIES

## THE TREASURES OF POMPEII

The exhibition has a good selection of authentic Roman pieces from the 1st century BCE, contemporary with the disappearance of Pompeii.

Get together with a group of friends and choose the one you like the most and try to draw it in detail.



Investigate the piece you have chosen. What was it for? What material is it made of? How old is it?

The piece you have chosen is almost certainly similar to others in other museums around the world. Look for them and find any minor differences there may be between them.

Use this table to place any data of interest.



| NAME OF<br>PIECE | MATERIAL | COLOUR | AGE | WHAT WAS<br>IT USED FOR |
|------------------|----------|--------|-----|-------------------------|
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## CREATE A ROMAN NEWSPAPER

To do this you must understand the social, political and economic aspects of Pompeii and the Roman world. During your walk through the exhibition, take note of these key aspects that may suggest ideas for recounting the daily life of the Pompeiians.



Then you have to design a newspaper of ancient Rome from a specific year, covering several events, ads and stories. These may include articles on politics, entertainment (such as gladiator games that you will see in virtual reality), advertisements (perhaps to buy or sell a *domus* or a Roman villa such as that of the metaverse) and even an obituaries' section discussing prominent figures of the time.

You can even include the news of Pompeii's destruction due to the eruption of Vesuvius, what would this have been like in a newspaper in ancient Rome?



For this activity use relevant resources such as books, documentaries and credible websites, so that you can offer truthful news about ancient Rome.



Now, let's imagine in Pompeii and by extension in ancient Rome. People lived in large buildings called *insulae*. The wealthy had luxurious houses with colourful murals on the walls and some of them can be seen in the immersive part of the exhibition.

In the morning, citizens could go to the forum, which was like a large market and meeting place. They would chat with friends, buy food and listen to the latest news.

To have fun, the Romans went to places called amphitheatres, such as the Roman Colosseum. Here, they watched exciting big games: naval battles called Naumachias and the famous gladiator fights. The gladiators were strong fighters who fought against each other or against wild animals.

The exhibition is, in the main, a trip through time in which you are witnessing many details of everyday life. Look for elements of this daily life of the ancient Romans which today, two thousand years later, are very similar. I'll give you a clue, the kitchens and bathrooms are practically the same. But surely you'll discover many more!



A 360-degree walk through the ruins of Pompeii  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQMA2uAfmoo>

Walk through the streets of Pompeii  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5g88SEVAXhU>



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