

THE LAST DAYS OF
POMPEII

THE IMMERSIVE EXHIBITION



TEACHING GUIDE



SECONDARY
TEACHERS

HISTORY OF ROME

A long, long time ago, there was a powerful city called Rome. It was erected in 753 BCE on the banks of the River Tiber. Today we'll be travelling in time and delving into its amazing history!



The Capitoline wolf with Romulus and Remus.

After a while, the inhabitants of Rome no longer wanted monarchs. They decided to create the Roman Republic, a government system in which there are no monarchs. Instead, Rome was led by two leaders called consuls, elected every year. There was also a great meeting place called the Senate, where important people argued how to run the city.



SPQR are the acronym of Senatus Populusque Romanus which means 'the Senate and the Roman people'.

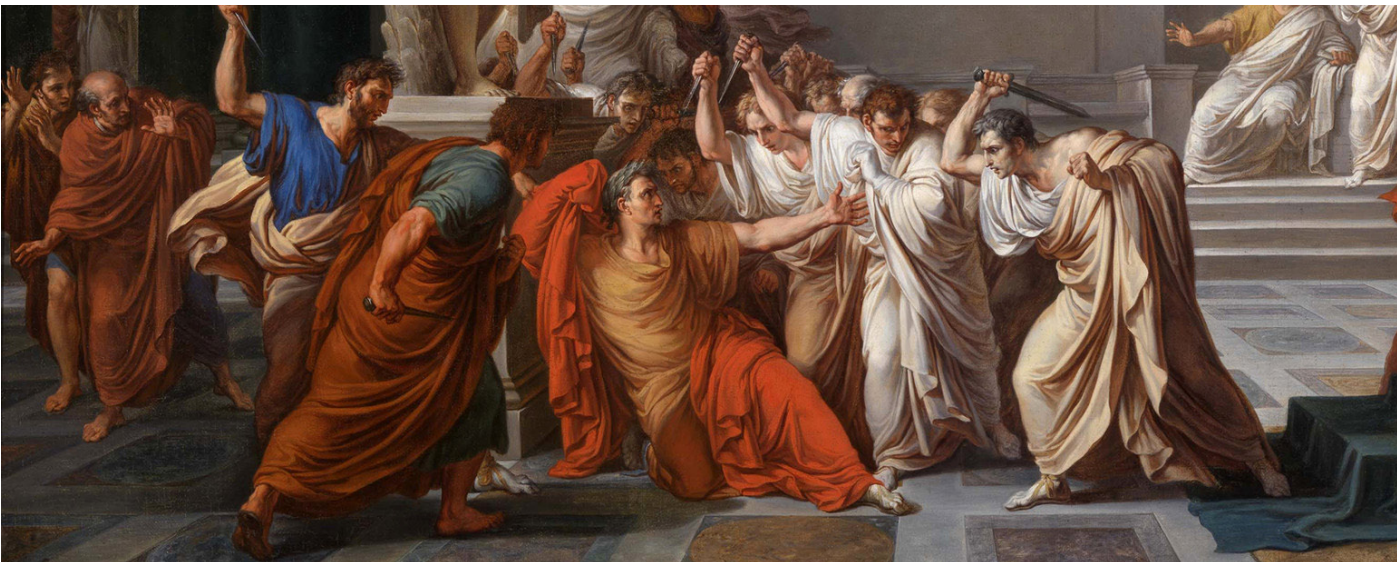
The story of Rome begins with a legend. It is said that the city was founded by two brothers, Romulus and Remus. The brothers had a fight, and in the end, Romulus became the first king of the city. That's why it's called Rome!

Rome had a very strong army. Roman soldiers, called legionaries, wore armour, bearing large shields and swords. Thanks to them, Rome began to conquer nearby lands. The Romans built what are known as Roman roads to be able to march faster and reach distant places.



The great Roman legion made the empire grow.

One of the most famous Romans 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. This led to a big problem: Julius Caesar was betrayed by his friends and died.



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





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. There were attacks from abroad and internal problems. Some emperors tried to solve them, whilst others were not particularly good rulers.

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).



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

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!

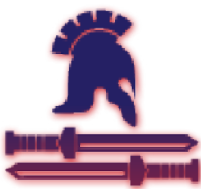
Although the Western Roman Empire fell, the history of Rome did not end there. Its ideas, art and even Latin (its language) lived on, forming the basis for many things we see and do today. So, every time you see a great building, listen to a story about brave heroes or even use words like “actor” or “animal”, it reminds us of the great city of Rome and its lasting legacy.



The legacy of the Roman Empire lives on today. This is the Roman Colosseum.

And that was basically a quick overview of the history of ancient Rome. A city of warriors, thinkers and builders who left a mark in our world forever!





TIMELINE

ANCIENT ROME



218 BCE ARRIVAL OF ROME
in Hispania



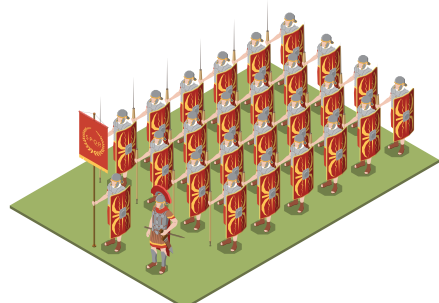
39 BCE DEATH OF CLEOPATRA
AND MARK ANTONY



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



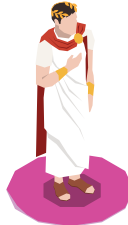
509 BCE CREATION OF THE REPUBLIC



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

KEY MOMENTS IN THE HISTORY OF ROME



753 BCE • Foundation of Rome with Romulus and Remus

509 BCE • Creation of the Republic

264 BCE • Start of the Punic Wars

218 BCE • Arrival of Rome in Hispania (Iberian peninsula)

146 BCE • Destruction of Carthage

46-44 BCE • Caesar's dictatorship until his death

39 BCE • Death of Cleopatra and Mark Antony

27 BCE • Creation of the Empire, coronation of Augustus.

54 CE • Nero's Ascent to the Throne

72 CE • Construction of the Roman Coliseum

79 CE • Destruction of Pompeii by Vesuvius

117 CE • Great expansion of Rome

with Emperor Trajan

395 CE • Division of the Empire by Theodosius.

The Roman Eastern Empire emerged

476 CE • Invasion by the Barbarians.

Fall of the Western Roman Empire



BEFORE THE VISIT

In this 360-degree video you can gain an overview of what Pompeii is today and what tourists actually visit.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQMA2uAfmoo>

The author is Nestor Marqués, one of the best disseminators of ancient Rome today. He has a highly recommended channel, Ancient Rome up to date:

https://www.youtube.com/@antigua_Roma

where all kinds of teaching and related contents can be found.



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



THEMES TO TALK ABOUT WITH STUDENTS

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ANCIENT ROME?

Most knowledge about ancient Rome undoubtedly derives from the history of cinema. One of the clearest examples is the figure of Emperor Nero, perhaps the greatest governor in the entire history of Rome who has been attributed with for all kinds of mishaps for which he was not to blame, such as the city's fire. As with the media today, the story is sometimes told in a misrepresented manner by groups who have interests contrary to a specific person. This is the case of Nero and also of Caligula who is said to have appointed his horse as consul. They are all hearsay that were spread by their enemies.



Decoration in a Pompeii domus.

The exhibition takes its name from the novel by the English novelist Edward G. Bulwer Lytton. This author is one of the most important romantic writers who masterfully described the life of a series of people just before the Vesuvius disaster. Perhaps it would be interesting to read some passages from the novel with the students.



Illustration of daily life in ancient Rome.



One of the keys we have to knowing about Roman culture is its literature. Thanks to medieval copyists, thousands of old texts have been passed down to us, with plays, letters, biographies and, ultimately, the entire literary spectrum of a civilisation. Some of those letters, such as those of Pliny the Younger to Tacitus, describe in detail what happened in those days of October of the year 79 CE in Pompeii in relation to the eruption of Vesuvius. He is an exceptional witness whose voice we will also listen to in some parts of the immersive exhibition.



ROME AS THE BASIS FOR OUR CULTURE

It should be noted that Roman culture forms the basis of our society. Language, law, many festivities, etc. derive from ancient Rome. In the same way, we should make it clear that we must avoid idealising it. It was a completely unequal and unfair society viewed from the current perspective, but very advanced for the standards of the time.



The streets of Pompeii.

NATURAL DISASTERS TODAY

Natural disasters have always been frequent. The kids need to understand that in the past these events were not really understood, but rather were attributed to the action of the gods. However, at present some of them can be predicted, although the most complicated are volcanic eruptions. Their consequences are devastating. A good example is what happened on the island of La Palma in 2022.

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



POMPEII AND HERCULANEUM.

A TIME CAPSULE

The working methods in archaeology have changed a lot in the last 300 years. Moreover, at that time, archaeology was not understood as such. The excavations performed were simple holes in the ground to get to where the statues, reliefs or mosaics were, having been started without further ado in order to decorate the palaces of the nobles and the monarchs.

One of the people who focused his interest in the study, documentation and conservation of heritage, always with the ways of the time, lest we forget, was Charles VII of Naples, then Charles III of Spain. When he was barely twenty-two years old, he sent one of his most important engineers and military officers,



Charles III of Spain and VII of Naples.

Roque Joaquín de Alcubierre (Saragossa 1702-Naples 1780), to build a palace near Vesuvius. Alcubierre soon found the ruins of Herculaneum's lost theatre and the ruins 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. However, it was Alcubierre who made the first strides towards carrying out a protoarchaeological study of the place. He used engineering systems never used before for excavation.

There is a dark legend about his work pointing out that he only destroyed and pierced here and there to look for treasures. However, anyone who sees his documentation will realise that this was not the case. As an engineer he excavated following methods that protected the structures of the buildings. His great findings include the Villa of the Papyri in Herculaneum, one of the great findings of the time. Charles III was a pioneer in investing money in excavations and scientific research to study these documents, paying for a machine that helped unravel the papyrus rolls without deteriorating them. It is a library of philosophical books, the only one preserved since ancient times. Something that nobody had put forward until that time and which served as the point of departure for archaeology.



The Vesuvius Crater



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

As we have explained before, “The last days of Pompeii” is the title of a nineteenth-century novel by an English author called Edward G. Bulwer Litton. This London author is one of the most important romantic writers. His description of everyday life in Rome in the 1st century is extraordinary.



The sample begins with a series of panels where all the necessary information is discovered in order to be able to situate ourselves 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 the visitor into the protagonist of everything that was lived in the city of the late 1st century of the Common Era.



Then you can enjoy the immersive part. A video projected almost 1,200 square metres will tell you the story of Pompeii’s discovery by Roque Joaquín Alcubierre and you can travel through the streets of Pompeii as they are today and what they were like just before the eruption of the volcano. You will hear the voice of Pliny the Younger, a contemporary writer who has left to us a series of 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 Pompeian 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.



AFTER THE VISIT

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION SIMULATION

The purpose of this activity is to understand the archaeological process and the importance of the findings in Pompeii.

You have to prepare a sand box or a large container with layers of sand and earth, ashes if you can get them. The idea is to create a stratigraphy, in other words, the profile of an excavation where you can see the strata, each of them in a period. The deeper it is, the older it is.

Amongst the strata we must place hidden “objects” (small toys, coins or ceramic fragments).

Students are provided with brushes and tools to carefully unearth these objects. Then ask them to catalogue their findings, drawing and describing the potential use of each object in ancient times.



ROMAN CUISINE DAY

This activity sets out to explore the culinary habits of the ancient Romans. One of the panels of the first part of the exhibition is dedicated precisely to food and cooking in ancient Rome.

Students must investigate popular foods and recipes at that time. They can prepare these dishes at home or as part of a class activity, presenting their dishes and explaining the ingredients and their importance in Roman daily life.

At this website you can find information to share with the students

<https://www.cocinasinreceta.com/recetas/recetas-mas-viejas-que-matusalen-roma-clasica/>

There are references by classic authors. One of the best known is Apicio (1st century), a contemporary of the Pompeiian era) whose book *De Re-coquinaria* you can also find here:

<https://laboliteria.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/de-re-coquinaria-cocina-romana-apicio.pdf>



LATIN PHRASEOLOGY

This activity sets out to look at the language of ancient Rome in greater depth.

Students will be provided with a list of phrases and words in Latin that have influenced modern languages. Students will create a phrase book, translating these terms and using them in modern sentences. For example,

Alea iacta est - the dice have been cast. (Attributed to Julius Caesar when he decided to cross the Rubicon River.)

Ante meridiem (a.m.) / Post meridiem (p.m.) - Before noon / after noon (which we use when saying the time)

Et cetera (etc.) - and the rest. (Used to indicate “and so on” or “and other similar things.”)

Ipso facto - by that very fact. (Something is true by its very nature.)

Mea culpa - My fault. (An admission of error or guilt.)

Pro bono - For the public good. (Work done for free, especially in a legal context.)

Quid pro quo - Something for something. (An exchange of favours or goods.)

Sic - in this way. (Used in writing to indicate that a word or phrase has been quoted literally, despite any error or peculiarity.)

Tempus fugit - Time flies.

Veni, Vidi, Vinci - I came, I saw, I conquered. (Another phrase attributed to Julius Caesar after a quick victory in battle.)

And here are a few more ...

Ars longa, vita brevis

Carpe Diem

Cave Canem

Cogito, ergo sum

Delirium Tremens

Vox populi...

etc!

They do not all have their origin in ancient Rome, but they bear testimony to the importance of Latin in our language and daily life.



BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR TEACHERS

Once again the most recommended books are those of Nestor Marqués. Countless anecdotes that help present the history of ancient Rome in a very attractive way. We have added some others that provide a more specific vision of what happened in Pompeii.

M. Beard, *Pompeii*, Barcelona 2014.

F. Lillo, *Un día en Pompeya*, Madrid 2020.

N. Marqués, *Un año en la antigua roma. La vida cotidiana de los romanos a través de su calendario*, Madrid 2020.

N. Marqués, *¡Que los dioses nos ayuden!: Religiones, ritos y supersticiones de la antigua Roma*, Madrid 2021.

N. Marqués, *Momentos de la antigua Roma que cambiaron el mundo*, Madrid 2023.

M. Romero, *Pompeya: vida, muerte y resurrección de la ciudad sepultada por el Vesubio*, Madrid 2010.



BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR STUDENTS

C. Delgado, *La vida en la Antigua Roma*, Madrid 2022.

C. Lawrence, *Roman Mysteries 3. The Pirates of Pompeii*, Barcelona 2021.

R. Platt and M. Cappon, *Through Time: Pompeii*, Barcelona 2007.

M. Pope, *Vacation under the Volcano*, Madrid 2017.

P. Riley, *Pompeii a three -dimensional walk through the ancient Roman city!*, Madrid 2011.

E. Trujillo, F. Valiente, *Busca en la antigua Roma*, Madrid 2015.

LINKS THAT MAY INTEREST YOU
Walk through the streets of Pompeii
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5g88SEVAXhU>
Mary Beard, Pompeii: Life and Death in a Roman Town
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NbZGWWGbyh7c>



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