

Daily Life in Pax Romana

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All societies have problems. Even at its economic and political height, Roman society was no different. Social classes clashed over political, social, and economic problems regularly, sometimes violently. For the purposes of this unit, we have identified five social classes: (1) Senators; (2) Patricians; (3) Equestrians; (4) Plebeians; and (5) Slaves/Freedmen. Students will explore the daily life, attitudes, and problems faced by a particular social class during the reign of Augustus Caesar (27 BCE-14 CE) as they attempt to convince other social classes to join with them to change Roman society. Beginning with research using the Internet, the library and other sources, groups will develop characters of a particular social class and from a particular region of the Roman Empire, tackle a problem faced by their social class, and then develop a solution that might be supported by other classes. Each group member will create a map of his/her country of origin and his/her journey to Rome. The group as a whole will create a video to present the problem and the solution as well as their daily lives and attitudes. The unit will culminate in a final presentation of the videos, an analytical panel discussion of the issue, a classroom vote and Caesar's final response.

Requirements of the Project

Map

- The map should be clear and visually pleasing.
- It should show your social group's city and country of origin and how you came to Rome.
- Map should be scaled and keyed.
- Major rivers, mountains, cities, and products should be easily identifiable.
- Insets should give the viewer an idea of the countryside and climate.
- Inset should illustrate information about the percentage of each social class in Roman society.

Video Skit

- The skit needs to be entertaining (dramatic, humorous). Richness of action, language, gesture, props, and costume will be important.
- The social class (e.g. slaves) and country of origin of your group (e.g. Pannonia) must be presented. Each individual should create his/her own personal identity.
- The video should expose your class's attitudes toward other social classes.

Created by C. Brant Switzler
with lots of help from Drew Krause, T.J. Scollan, Mike Nanney, and Mike Skara

Daily Life in Pax Romana

- A problem affecting Ancient Rome must be raised and addressed in the skit.
- The video should provide support for your solution to the problem.
- The video should be skillfully organized and edited using appropriate sound, transitions, and titling.

Video Presentation

- Each student should participate in the presentation.
- The video and the map should be presented. Each group participant should explain their character and how they became members of their particular social class.
- A Bibliography of the sources (10 minimum) used to put together the group's information should be presented.

Panel Discussion

- After the video is presented, a member from each of the five social classes will participate in a panel discussion of the problem, express the viewpoint of their social class, and vote on the solution.
- All students will be a part of the panel for at least one problem. On the day of the discussion students should be dressed in costume.
- Students should represent accurately the position their social class might take on each issue and speak clearly and eloquently in support of that position.

Enrichment

Extra Credit

Caesar Godettus has commissioned the creation of the following:

- The re-design of the front of Readington Middle School in the Roman Style.
- The replication of a Roman sculpture in clay.
- The replication of a Roman building in clay.
- The creation of a mosaic out of scraps of paper depicting a mythological figure.
- The writing, learning, and playing of a musical piece in a style ancient Romans might have appreciated.
- The re-creation and presentation of the order of battle of a famous Roman battle.
- The choreography and performance of a dance in a style ancient Romans might have appreciated.
- The writing of a poem re-telling one of the Roman myths.
- The replication of a Roman fortification that might have been built in the frontier.

Students may choose any of the above for extra credit in the project as long as the basic project is complete. All extra credit projects must be cleared with Mr. Scollan or Mr. Switzler.

Daily Life in Pax Romana

Sample Problems/Issues

Below are samples of problems for students to look over, use, or change.

- Full Roman citizenship rights should be extended to conquered subjects in the provinces (e.g. Gaul).
- Local leaders in colonized regions should be appointed as military or political authorities for the empire.
- The *annona* (public welfare) system should be ceased to conserve the imperial treasury.
- The Senate proposes funds to build a large fleet for seafaring and trade in Asia Minor and North Africa.
- Taxes will be raised on all excise goods bought and sold in the cities.
- Continued military expansion beyond the empire's borders.
- Property taxes will be reduced for Patrician landholders.
- The treasury has shifted resources to build and repair roads and aqueducts throughout Europe.
- Every Roman citizen (male and female) is entitled to a public education.
- Roman legions must acquire food and grain supplies from Patricians' farms.
- Imperial food distribution program from the countryside to the cities.
- Plebeians are ineligible to serve as members of the Senate.
- Rome should discontinue funding for all arenas, public events, and the arts to help raise level of public services.
- Rome should develop rundown sectors of Rome to modernize living quarters for the poor.
- All citizens must register for two years of military service to ensure the strength of the Roman military.

Student Timeline:

Day 1 Introduction

- Participate in the introduction to the unit and explanation of student tasks.
- Access all files from Microsoft Outlook and save the documents to your P-drive.
- Review with Mrs. Hoesley the use of "[Athena](#)" and "[Research Assistant](#)".
- Participate in discussion of Internet search techniques and source validity.
- In the computer lab, begin your research by accessing the Ancient Roman websites listed in [Web Quest 7](#).
- Consult the PBS web site in the computer lab and read the section titled "The Social Order." (<http://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/index.html>)

Daily Life in Pax Romana

Homework-

- ❑ Using information from your textbook, your research, and the [PBS web site](#) section ‘The Social Order’, list at least five responsibilities and traits of your group’s social class.
- ❑ Write one paragraph to respond to the question: How does your social class (e.g. Plebeians) feel about the other four social classes? Describe the relationships.

Day 2 Organization

- ❑ Visit the library and Mr. Switzler’s room 314 for research.
- ❑ Meet with Mr. Scollan to organize group responsibilities.
- ❑ Participate in mini-lessons explaining how to use still and video cameras.
- ❑ Continue utilizing the [Web Quest](#) sites for information.
- ❑ Select a province or city that will serve as the province/city of origin for your group. Access the following site: <http://www.dalton.org/groups/Rome/RMap.html>
- ❑ Begin using encyclopedias, magazines, journals and books to collect information.
- ❑ Record all sources of information in “Research Assistant.”

Homework-

- ❑ List a set of five problems or issues that affected your group’s social class in Ancient Rome. How would your social class like to see these problems resolved?
- ❑ Continue research.

Day 3 Brainstorm

- ❑ Become familiar with script writing and [script writing template](#).
- ❑ Each group should share out its problem lists and then select one problem in Ancient Rome to portray in the skit.
- ❑ Group members should determine from their research how their social class might like to see the problem solved.
- ❑ Submit a copy of the problem and solution to Mr. Scollan for distribution to the other social classes.
- ❑ Brainstorm ideas for skit action and use “[Inspiration](#)” to organize the group’s plans into a diagram and outline. Each group member should have a copy.
- ❑ Continue research to acquire necessary facts, concepts and evidence that refer to the problem and give necessary background for the skit.
- ❑ Access information from [National Geographic](#).
- ❑ Update Research Assistant note cards and bibliography files.
- ❑ Begin to record and fill in a description of your character in the skit with the [Identity Template](#) file. Share this information with your group.
- ❑ Utilize notes and information to begin writing a draft of the script.

Homework-

- ❑ Complete the Identity Template.
- ❑ Each group member should lay out the skit as they would like to see it done. Try to balance amusing scenes with educational information.
- ❑ List types of props, visuals, creative lines and dramatic scenes to include.

Daily Life in Pax Romana

Day 4 Script Drafting

- ❑ Group members should share out their script ideas and determine the sequence of events for the script.
- ❑ Producer: Begin organizing required props, visual aids, backdrops and costumes. Communicate information to scriptwriter. Find group members to bring in props, costumes, etc.
- ❑ Tech Director: Determine where and how each scene will be shot. Communicate information to producer and scriptwriter. Organize background shots. Sign up for time to use cameras.
- ❑ Researcher and Research Editor: Working together, check each draft to assure that the content has been accurately and completely addressed. Make informational additions to each draft. Continue research as necessary. Help Tech Director find background shots.
- ❑ Scriptwriter: Completes the first draft of the skit.
- ❑ Finish typing the final draft of your Identity Template for the character that you will play in the videotaped skit.
- ❑ Researcher and Researcher-Editor: Update Research Assistant bibliographies and note cards and check draft for accuracy.

Homework-

- ❑ Lay out the map of your homeland and journey to Rome.
- ❑ Tie up on loose ends from class.
- ❑ Bring in props and costuming.
- ❑ Tie up all loose ends from class.

Day 5 Script Editing

- ❑ Producer: Continue constructing required props, visual aids, backdrops and costumes. Edit script with scriptwriter.
- ❑ Researcher and Research Editor: Check each draft to assure that the content has been accurately and completely addressed. Continue research as necessary. Update the bibliography.
- ❑ Tech Director: Organize background shots and video files on computer. Communicate the timing of the shoots with the rest of the group.
- ❑ Scriptwriter: Complete writing a second typed draft of the script and submit it to the group.

Homework-

- ❑ Complete the map.
- ❑ Bring in props and costumes.
- ❑ Tie up loose ends from class.

Daily Life in Pax Romana

Day 6 Videotaping

- ❑ Review the skit and make the final additions/corrections.
- ❑ Begin practicing lines and rehearsing the skit.
- ❑ Begin videotaping and saving to computer.
- ❑ As a group look over the problems and solutions from other social classes and determine how your social class felt about their problem and whether they would have supported or opposed the solution and **why**.
- ❑ Determine which group member will represent the group in each of the final panel discussions.

Homework-

- ❑ Memorize your lines and practice the skit for filming.
- ❑ Write what you will say in the final panel discussion on the problem assigned you.
- ❑ Work on extra credit.

Day 7 Representing Your Social Class

- ❑ Share with your group what you plan to say in the panel discussion. Revise and edit each as a group.
- ❑ Videotape skits
- ❑ Producer and Tech Director: Edit and revise video footage with the appropriate software. Add or remove the usage of props and visuals accordingly.
- ❑ Researcher and Research Editor: Complete the Bibliography and submit the final copy to Mr. Scollan for review.
- ❑ Make necessary adjustments to the script, note cards, identity templates and other materials.
- ❑ Work on extra credit.

Homework-

- ❑ Continue practicing lines and actions in the skit.
- ❑ Make last minute revisions to the skit (if necessary) such as changing lines, actions in scenes or usage of background imagery and props.
- ❑ Complete the writing of what you will say in the final panel discussion on the problem assigned you.
- ❑ Work on extra credit.

Day 8 United States and Rome

- ❑ Videotape skits.
- ❑ Continue editing and revising.
- ❑ Make necessary adjustments to the script, bibliography, identity templates and other materials.
- ❑ Brainstorm with your group: What relationship do you see between the problem your group addressed in Ancient Rome and the problems we experience today in the United States? What are the similarities and differences?
- ❑ Work on extra credit.

Daily Life in Pax Romana

Homework-

- ❑ Using the information discussed with your group write a paragraph expressing your opinion on the following. **History repeats itself. Although times change, societies today are addressing the same basic issues societies have always addressed.**
- ❑ Work on extra credit.

Day 9 Organizing Presentation

- ❑ Complete the skit- videotaping, editing, saving.
- ❑ Organize the video presentation and practice it.
- ❑ Work on extra credit.

Homework

- ❑ Tie up all loose ends for the project.
- ❑ Write a paragraph describing daily life during the reign of Augustus Caesar. What have you learned about Roman society during the period?
- ❑ Bring in all work related to project.

Day 10 Presenting, Feasting, and Voting

- ❑ Class presentations of each group's videotaped skit.
- ❑ Panel discussion and feasting after each presentation.
- ❑ Acting as the Roman Senate, the entire class votes on proposed solutions given in the remaining skits.
- ❑ The entire class witnesses Caesar's decision.

Homework-

- ❑ Complete the [self-reflection sheet and the project evaluation](#).