

Liceo Scientifico Marinelli

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TITOLO: The gladiators

CLASSE: Il modulo interessa l'ambito della storia-civiltà latina, per cui esso assume carattere interdisciplinare e può essere svolto coinvolgendo le materie storia e latino. Si prevede di proporre questo modulo in una seconda classe del liceo scientifico quando gli studenti hanno già affrontato per la lingua veicolare lo studio della forma passiva, ed in riferimento ai contenuti, conoscono la società romana dell'epoca imperiale. Evidentemente ciò impone di affrontare il modulo nella seconda parte dell'anno scolastico.

PREREQUISITI: La situazione storico-sociale dell'età imperiale; la politica del *panem et circenses*; i giochi e gli spettacoli a Roma nell'età imperiale.

CONTENUTI DISCIPLINARI: il contesto dei *ludi gladiatorii*; i gladiatori

OBIETTIVI:

CONOSCENZE:

- L'origine dei giochi gladiatori
- Il gladiatore ed il contesto dei giochi
- Tipi di gladiatori.

COMPETENZE:

- Individuare concetti principali in un testo
- Ricollocare informazioni desunte in un testo diverso
- Confrontare informazioni e collegarle
- Rielaborare informazioni desunte da un testo

NUMERO DI ORE: Si prevede di utilizzare circa cinque ore per affrontare i contenuti. Per la verifica si utilizzerà un'ora .

MATERIALE DIDATTICO: materiale fornito dal docente.

Modulo “The Gladiators”

ARTICOLAZIONE DELLE ATTIVITA’

I LEZIONE

Innanzitutto si procederà ad esporre il significato e gli obiettivi del modulo.

Si partirà con una attività di brainstorming sulle conoscenze che i ragazzi hanno della storia e della società romana e chiedendo loro di far riferimento anche a film (inevitabile un raffronto con “Il Gladiatore”) o a letture personali, si andrà evidenziando il lessico relativo all’argomento. Trattandosi di una seconda classe si cercherà di far emergere termini in inglese, ma anche in latino [dovrebbero emergere termini latini come *gladiator*, *-oris*, *lanista*, *-ae*, *servus*, *i*, *homo*, *-inis*, *arena*, *-ae*, *ludi*, *orum*, *circus*, *i*, *spectaculum*, *i*, *gladius*, *i*, *fera*, *ae*, e termini inglesi come *slave*, *gladiators*, *free-born man*, *contest*, *combat*, *arena*, *game*, *public*.....].

Dopo aver fornito il testo del primo esercizio (listen and complete), si farà ascoltare ai ragazzi il primo breve testo (The Origins) e si chiederà loro di completare il primo esercizio.

II LEZIONE

Dopo aver ripreso e riconsiderato le parole-chiave emerse nella prima attività, si procederà alla lettura del secondo testo (the gladiator) scomposta in due parti e per la prima parte si chiederà, dopo aver svolto l’esercizio sul lessico, di rispondere ai quesiti proposti, per la seconda di completare la griglia suggerita. Ciò consentirà di focalizzare la figura del gladiatore in tutti i suoi aspetti. Si chiederà di elaborare per casa una mappa globale dei contenuti affrontati.

III LEZIONE

A partire dalla mappa degli studenti si richiederà l’elaborazione orale di un breve testo riassuntivo (verifica in itinere).

La seconda parte della lezione sarà dedicata alla lettura del testo successivo (The *Lanista*) ed allo svolgimento dell’attività correlata (complete).

IV LEZIONE

Oggetto della lezione saranno sia l’approfondimento dei tipi di gladiatori. Si partirà dal quadro “*Pollice verso*” di Jaen-Leon Gerome per richiamare l’attenzione sull’abbigliamento dei gladiatori e sul fatto che essi si presentavano al pubblico in modo diverso. Si organizzerà poi il Cooperative learning: gli studenti saranno divisi in tre gruppi cui verrà affidata ciascuna delle tre parti del testo e cui si chiederà di compilare per la parte affidata la tabella. Gli elementi di ciascun gruppo, poi, verranno mescolati con quelli degli altri gruppi, e i nuovi gruppi saranno chiamati a confrontare gli elementi emersi e a compilare una tabella globale per tutti i tipi di gladiatori. L’attività finale prevede una condivisione per l’intero gruppo classe delle informazioni raccolte ed un momento di confronto con alcune scene tratte dal film “Il gladiatore” in cui si vedono alcuni dei gladiatori studiati.

L’attività durerà circa due ore.

VERIFICA

Sarà un segmento didattico dedicato alla costruzione di un elaborato scritto relativo all’argomento trattato.

THE GLADIATORS

THE ORIGINS

The first gladiatorial contest in Rome took place in 264 BC as part of an aristocratic funerary ritual, a *munus* or funeral gift for the dead. Decimus Junius Brutus put on a gladiatorial combat in honor of his deceased father with three pairs of slaves serving as gladiators in the Forum Boarium (a commercial area that was named after the Roman cattle market) . The Romans called a display of gladiatorial combat a *munus*, that is, 'a duty' paid by descendants to a dead ancestor. The *munus* served the purpose of keeping alive the memory of an important individual after death. *Munera* were held some time after the funeral and were often repeated at annual or five-year intervals. Gladiatorial fights were not incorporated into public games until the late first century.

1. Listen and complete.

The first gladiatorial contest took place in _____ at _____ .

_____ organized it as *munus*, which is _____
_____.

These *munera* were repeated at _____.

They were incorporated into public games only _____.

THE GLADIATOR

Gladiators were usually recruited from criminals, slaves (especially captured fugitives), and prisoners of war. Criminals, having lost their citizen rights and slaves and prisoners of war having none, had no choice about becoming a gladiator, if they had the physical and emotional make-up necessary for the profession. Some free-born men, however, although they had not lost their citizen rights, voluntarily chose the profession and bound themselves body and soul to the owner of a gladiatorial troupe (*lanista*) by swearing an oath “*uri, vinciri, ferroque necari*” and to do whatever the master ordered. It has been estimated that by the end of the Republic, about half of the gladiators were volunteers (*auctorati*), who took on the status of a slave for an agreed-upon period of time.

Even women fought as gladiators, although rarely. Domitian had women fight by torchlight and on another occasion had women fight with dwarves. Romans loved these exotic gladiatorial combats. In Petronius one character looks forward to the appearance of a female gladiator called an *essedaria*. The banning of female gladiators by Septimius Severus (late second, early 3rd cent. AD) suggests that women were taking up this occupation in alarming numbers.

2a. Vocabulary exercise: matching

oath

make-up

banning

take up

trasformazione

divieto

intraprendere

giuramento

2b. Answer the following questions:

- a. Who were the gladiators?
- b. What was the gladiatorial oath?
- c. What is the Latin word for the owner of a gladiatorial troupe?

But why would a free man want to become a gladiator? When he took the gladiator's oath, he agreed to be treated as a slave and suffered the ultimate social disgrace (*infamia*). Seneca describes the oath as *turpissimum* (*Ep.* 37.1-2). As unattractive as this may sound to us, there were advantages. The candidate's life took on new meaning. He became a member of a cohesive group that was known for its courage, good morale, and absolute fidelity to its master to the point of death. His life became a model of military discipline and through courageous behavior he was also now capable of achieving honor similar to that enjoyed by Roman soldiers on the battlefield. There were other advantages. He would not fight more than 2 or 3 times a year and would have a chance of fame and wealth (with which they could buy their freedom), employing those military skills that were appropriate to the citizen-soldier. In the arena, the volunteer gladiator could indulge his fantasy of military glory and fame before an admiring crowd. As a gladiator, he could achieve the kind of public adulation that modern athletes enjoy today.

Donald Kyle points out other practical advantages of the gladiator's life:

The living conditions of gladiators were harsh but, as profitable investments, they perhaps lived better than many commoners in terms of food, housing, and medical attention. New or undisciplined men were shackled and unattended only in the bathroom, but trained gladiators were not always bound, imprisoned, or even confined to barracks.

3. Complete:

A free-man wanted to become a gladiator because:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- gladiator has particular living conditions: _____

THE LANISTA

Gladiators were owned by a person called a *lanista* and were trained in the *lanista's* school (*ludus*). Gladiatorial combat was as much a science as modern boxing (*Sen. Ep.* 22.1). Training involved the learning of a series of figures, which were broken down into various phases. In the early Empire there were four major gladiatorial schools, but by this time, the training of gladiators had been taken over by the state. No doubt it was thought too dangerous to allow private citizens to own and train gladiators, who could be easily turned into a private army for revolutionary purposes. Therefore, with very few exceptions, gladiators were under the control and ownership of the emperor, although the *lanista* continued to train and own gladiators outside of Rome. The *lanista* made a profit by renting or selling the troupe. This was a very lucrative business, but on the other hand, he was viewed as among the lowest of the low on the social scale. The objection was that these men derived their whole income from treating human beings like animals.

4. Complete:

The gladiatorial school was called _____ In the early Empire there were _____ private _____ but by this time they were taken by the _____ because there was _____ allow private citizens to _____.

Lanista at the beginning was the _____, then he continued _____ having a profit _____ because this was _____.

However he was much criticized because he treated _____

TYPES OF GLADIATORS



This is a famous painting (1872) called "*Pollice Verso*" (by Jean-Léon Gérôme from a phrase in Juvenal) that represents a victorious gladiator facing spectators, who are demanding the death of his defeated opponent (this is the meaning of *pollice verso*). Gérôme had done research into gladiatorial apparatus.

1. The defeated fighter, a *retiarius* is depicted accurately; he has no helmet or shield and his weapons are a net and a trident (on the ground nearby). The opponent of the *retiarius* is a *secutor*, who carries a curved oblong shield, not visible in the picture. To the right, we see a *secutor* (with his curved oblong shield) moving in on a *retiarius*, who has lost his net and his trident (lying on the ground). He still holds his dagger, but he has been badly wounded in the calf and is on the point of giving up. The *retiarius* is easy to identify because he is the only gladiator with no helmet or shield. Another identifying factor is the high metal shoulder guard (*galerus*), which is unique to the *retiarius*. Finally, the protective sleeve called *manica* (heavy linen quilting held on by straps) protects his left arm, while the *secutor* (and all other categories of gladiator) wears the sleeve of his right arm. The *retiarius* was also special because his gear was not inspired by the military.



In essence, he was a fisherman, as his net and trident imply. Marcus Junkelmann has argued that the *secutor's* smooth-surfaced helmet with no brim, small eye-holes and a low, thin crest (as in image to the left) suggested a fish and thus made the *retiarius* his appropriate opponent.² The purpose of the small eye-holes was to prevent the narrow prongs of the *retiarius'* trident from penetrating into the eyes.



