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Primary Sources: Ancient Rome

This sample includes the following:

- Teacher's Guide Cover** (1 page)
- Table of Contents** (1 page)
- How to Use This Product** (2 pages)
- Lesson Plan** (4 pages)
- Primary Source Document** (1 page)

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— PRIMARY SOURCES —

Ancient Rome



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How to Use This Product

This unit, with its primary documents, photographs, and support materials, will allow both teacher and student to expand their study of history beyond the textbook and classroom. The resources in this book assist the busy teacher in presenting innovative primary source lessons that meet state and national standards. Easy to follow, concise, and aligned to the curriculum standards, the teacher lesson plans and student activity pages are certain to become a great addition to any classroom.

Using primary sources offers students the opportunity to act and think as historians. Students will participate in the constructive process of history by studying primary documents and photographs. Viewing historic photographs, handling facsimiles of famous documents, and reading the comments and opinions of those in the past will bring history alive for students. Understanding the background of each primary source will help students to put historical events and attitudes into perspective, to think progressively, and to walk in the shoes of their ancestors.

The organization of the kit provides teachers with all they need to accomplish the lessons without additional research or planning. Teachers have the photographs and documents at their fingertips without scurrying to find such references. Activities are varied, interesting, challenging, and engaging.

The Book

The **teacher pages** provide lesson plans organized with objectives, materials, discussion questions, suggestions for using the primary sources, and extension ideas. **Historical background pages** are provided to give teachers and students information about each of the primary sources being studied. The coordinating **student activity pages** allow the flexibility for a class, individuals, or small groups of students to focus on a specific task and provide direction for a series of tasks to be completed during a time period.

The **standards** and **objectives** for the lessons are both process and content objectives to cover the full range of social studies skills. The standard listed for each lesson is a process standard taken from one of the ten strands of the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS, *Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies*, <http://www.ncss.org>). The objective listed for each lesson is a content learning objective describing what students will learn and how they will show what they have learned. A complete chart listing each lesson in the book and the corresponding standards is available on the CD in the folder entitled *Lesson Support Files* (standard.pdf).

The **document-based assessment** section provides student preparation and practice on the document-based questions that appear on many standardized tests today. Students will be able to analyze for meanings, compare and contrast, compose short answers, and even respond to and reflect on topics with longer essay questions. The entire testing section will provide students with opportunities to prepare for a variety of testing situations.

The Photographs

Each photograph has four general areas on the back for teacher and student use. The top of the card has a brief **Historical Background Information** section. Along the left side of the card is the **Analyzing History** section. This includes questions and activities designed to make students analyze what they see and learn. In the **Historical Writing** section, students are given two writing assignments, one fiction and one nonfiction. Finally, the **History Challenge** section offers fun extension ideas for the students. The teacher lesson plans do not necessarily refer to each of the sections on the back of the card. These activities can be used by teachers in any way that fits their classroom needs (group work, individual work, learning center, etc.).

The Primary Sources

The documents, letters, maps, and other primary sources are provided in both an authentic-looking format as well as in the book for reproduction. The large copies of the primary sources should be shared with the students so that they can see and feel the facsimiles. The easy-to-read copies of the primary sources in the book can be reproduced for the students to use during student activities. If the text of a document is too long, only an excerpt of the text is included in the book. The entire text of the document is available on the CD.

The CD

The CD provided with the book has copies of the 16 main primary sources and photographs, additional documents and photographs from the time period, and activities to support and enrich the lessons in the book, including 16 student pages to support the introduction. See pages 75–76 for more information about using the CD.

Objectives of This Unit

By participating in the lessons provided in this book, students will:

- articulate their observations.
- analyze what they see.
- improve their vocabularies.
- be prompted by visual clues.
- compare their assumptions against others.
- expand their appreciation for other time periods.

By presenting the lessons in this book, teachers will:

- improve students' test scores and improve test-taking skills.
- meet curriculum standards.
- create a learning environment that extends beyond the classroom.
- encourage students to take an active role in learning history.
- develop critical-thinking skills in students.

Spend in the Romans

Standard/Objective

- Give and explain examples of ways that economic systems structure choices about how goods and services are to be produced and distributed. (NCSS)
- Students will learn about Roman money and determine the value of various items using the five Roman coins.

Materials

Copy of the facsimile *Coins*; Copies of the historical background information (page 46); Copies of the student activity sheet (page 47); Apples; Candy bars; Pencils; Cards with prices; Blackboard or presentation device; Writing tools (chalk, pencil, etc.)

Discussion Questions

- Why and when would Romans have used math?
- Compare shopping in ancient Rome with shopping today.
- Compare the ancient Roman monetary system to a modern monetary system.
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using Roman numerals.
- Explain how an abacus worked and why Romans might have needed this tool.

Using the Primary Source

Students will look at the pictures of the various coins from different time periods during the Roman Empire. Discuss how people might have used and learned math then. Discuss shopping and the monetary system in Rome. Compare the advantages and disadvantages of bartering versus using coins.

Have students play “The Price is Right” using Roman coinage. Begin by having the students determine what they believe are the values of the various coins. List the following five items in random order on the board. (Note: They are listed here from most expensive to least expensive.)

1—one donkey—four *aureus*
 2—new toga—one *denarius*
 3—one pottery pitcher—one *sestertius*

4—a sack of wheat—one *dupondius*
 5—a bottle of olive oil—one *as*

Have the class work together to determine the order of the items from the most expensive to the least expensive. They should use their knowledge of the values of the five items to order these. After putting them in order, compare the five types of Roman money to determine how they relate to each other. Then you are ready to play the game.

Choose three players randomly from the class. Have them observe three items placed on a table (e.g., an apple, a candy bar, and a pencil). Each student will record the estimated prices in Roman money. The rest of the class can vote to determine who they think is the closest.

Extension Idea

Have students write some word problems using the Roman coin amounts.

Spend in the Romans *(cont.)*

Historical Background Information

The Roman economic system changed as the empire and its needs expanded. In early Rome, money was not used because people bartered one kind of good for another. Romans later used blocks of bronze weighing one Roman pound (32 grams or 11.44 ounces) to exchange for goods. The Roman Empire grew richer with time and the Roman economy increased in complexity. Eventually, coins were introduced. To pay soldiers' wages and collect taxes, the emperor minted the first coins.

The Romans borrowed aspects from the Greek economic system with their coin use. The first round coins appeared around 200 B.C. Romans opened mints and produced their own coins by 290 B.C. The first Roman coin, the *as*, was bronze and had the heads of gods or goddesses on one side and pictures of ships on the other. The first silver coin was called a *didrachm*. The first gold coin, the *aureus*, was introduced during the second Punic war. Coins and their styles, materials, and values changed as the economy changed.

When Augustus became emperor, he took control of the mints and standardized the monetary system giving coins a fixed value. This was needed as the uncertainty of coins and values were causing problems in the economy. Every coin produced had the emperor's head on it and sometimes the emperor's deeds depicted on the other side. This was an excellent way to get the word out to all of the people in the land and to publicize the good deeds of the emperor. The smallest coin of Rome (similar to the United States penny) was the *as*, followed by the *dupondius* worth two of the smallest coins, the *sestertius* worth two *dupondius*, and the *denarius* worth four *sestertius*. The *aurea* was the largest coin and could be exchanged for 100 of the smallest coin.

Bankers and moneychangers began appearing all over the empire. Some were government operated, while others were independent operations. The government imposed taxes (such as property taxes) to raise money to run the state. Up until this time, there had been no real need for raising taxes. Now that money was taking on an important place in finances, taxes were becoming important to finance the needed services. Traveling tax representatives, or assessors, determined how much tax people had to pay. Some services like buying and selling property (including slaves) automatically meant the assessor imposed a tax.

Prices rose constantly now that money was of value. New coins were minted thus increasing the value of money. Towards the end of the Roman Empire, people began to not trust the use of coins, and many people returned to the bartering system for a short time.

Many different Roman coins were minted over the years and are sometimes uncovered throughout Europe. Finding these coins with their informative pictures on both sides tell us about the emperors and deeds of ancient Rome.

Aside from their production of money, the Roman's knowledge of math certainly helped the Roman economic system. The ancient Romans invented Roman numerals. The Romans created this system of number symbols that made it possible to write all of the numbers from 1 to 1,000,000 using only seven symbols. Roman numerals are written from left to right. If you've ever used Roman numerals in addition or subtraction problems, you may find a problem with this number system.

Name _____

Roman Numerals

Background Information

Aside from their production of money, the Romans' knowledge of math helped the Roman economic system. The ancient Romans invented Roman numerals, a system of number symbols that made it possible to write all of the numbers from 1 to 1,000,000 with only seven symbols. Roman numerals are written from left to right using the principle of addition in most cases.

Activity

1. Research Roman numerals. Make a list of Roman numerals 1 to 10. Now add the numerals for 100 and 1,000 to the list.

2. Use this information to participate in a short Roman numerals writing lesson. You have to write questions and have your classmates provide the answers using only Roman numerals. The following are some sample questions: How many letters are in my name? How many boys or girls are in the class? How many computers are in the class? What is the date?

3. For fun, try some addition using Roman numerals. After trying to add with Roman numerals, draw some conclusions about what you find difficult about this number system.

4. Go on a scavenger hunt in the modern world for Roman numerals. Provide the numeral you find, read the entire numeral, and identify where you found it. Find as many Roman numerals as you can in the time provided by your teacher. (**Hint:** Don't forget to look in books, movies, outlines, clocks, etc.)

Challenge

Taxes go with services. Research and write an essay on what services were provided in Rome and how taxes were collected. Did they have a police force? Did they need garbage collection? Who or what did the collected taxes benefit?

Ancient Roman Coins



aureus (*gold*)



denarius (*silver*)



dupondius (*bronze*)



sestertius (*silver*)

