

*ROMANS TV –*  
*www.newportsouthwales.net/romanstv*

~Essential Background for Teachers ~

This TV programme is deliberately and deliciously over the top. It is presented purely from a Roman point of view and tries to show everything about the Romans in the best light possible. It is one-sided, biased and smug.

As far as our *Romans TV* presenters are concerned, the Roman invasion has brought nothing but massive benefits for the native Britons – new roads, towns, homes, food, fashion and entertainments, to name but a few. What's more, the victorious Roman army is still waging war on its neighbours, bringing new lands and new peoples under its rule, so there are opportunities aplenty for ambitious young men from Britain to join up and share in the glory.

*Romans TV* ridicules British customs, buildings and clothes, and takes no account of the legitimate grievances which the Britons might have, like the loss of their freedom, the stealing of their tribal lands or the taxes they now have to pay to their new Roman masters. What if native people do not *want* to live in Roman towns or villas? Or serve in the Roman army? Or eat Roman food and wear Roman clothes? Tough. *Romans TV* doesn't have time for such trivial complaints – the Romans are here to stay, and Britons who know what's good for them will get on with making the most of the opportunities Roman rule will bring.

So we have created *Romans TV* as a stimulus for children's research and classroom debate & discussion:

(NB although the *Romans TV* 'spin' is extremely biased, the information conveyed in the programme is factually accurate):

\* Can children find out more for themselves about the aspects of life covered in the show – fashion, sport, homes, food and the Roman army?

- Do their own researches tally with the *Romans TV* perspective?
- can further research enlarge upon the glimpses of life given by the programme – e.g the lives of gladiators, Roman sports like harpastum, Roman cookery and kitchens?

\* if *Romans TV* is used with upper juniors, teachers could focus more on the programme as a piece of historical interpretation:

- do children think *Romans TV* is a *good* piece of interpretation? (is it accurate? Fair? Balanced? Engaging? Thought-provoking?)
  - can they recognise and describe the inherent bias?
  - can they explain why the bias might be there?
  - could they produce a more balanced script for one or more of the features?
- in the Thinking Points document accompanying these notes, we have highlighted some of the issues which we think arise from the show and, where appropriate, suggested follow-up work for pupils. Teachers and children will doubtless think of many more of their own. Needless to say, teachers will decide for themselves how much debate, discussion or follow up work they wish to encourage as a result of this resource, and how much time they wish to devote to it.

We recommend that you show the *full video* to your pupils before seeing and discussing the different extracts from the programme.