

ROMANS TV

www.newportsouthwales.net/romanstv

~ Thinking Points ~

Developing debate, discussion & research from *Romans' TV*

As mentioned in the background notes document, we have deliberately produced *Romans' TV* to give a totally biased, pro-Roman viewpoint. The intention is to provoke debate and discussion and to encourage children to carry out their own research to question or test the version offered by the *Romans' TV* presenters. Was life in Roman Wales *really* as good as they make out? Was life before the Romans *really* that bad?

You'll notice on the website that we offer the choice for you to watch the whole programme or select from a number of themed chapters (fashion, sport, cooking, news, adverts & Fire). **We strongly recommend that children watch the whole programme at least once before viewing any of the chapters.**

At the end of each chapter you will find that two or three questions appear on screen. These represent just some of the issues that could arise from different aspects of *Romans' TV*. In the table that follows, we reproduce these questions (in the first column – 'Comment or Issue') and suggest some prompts which might aid the development of discussion along these lines (these are in the second column – 'Thinking Points'). For some children, the on-screen question might be enough to set them thinking and discussing. For others, they will need some guidance and steering, and this is where the teacher might use the Thinking Points to open up debate or prompt some further research.

Finally, the third column offers some ideas for possible follow-up work. Obviously, the possibilities are endless here, so our suggestions are merely that – *suggestions*. You'll notice, though, that we have tried to incorporate a wide variety of activities, like using PowerPoint, video, Critical Skills – style activities, etc., in addition to research and writing tasks. History is a marvellous vehicle for developing and practising a wide variety of skills, so try to make these most of opportunities in your choice of teaching and learning tasks.

ROMANS' TV

THINKING POINTS – FASHION

COMMENT or ISSUE	THINKING POINTS	IDEAS FOR FOLLOW-UP WORK
<p>The <i>Romans' TV</i> presenters were horrified by Bronwen's lack of style in her hair and clothing.</p> <p>Was there really such a big difference?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Wouldn't the Britons have taken a pride in their dress? * Did they have fashions and styles of their own? * Why did <i>Romans' TV</i> try to make fun of Bronwen's overall appearance? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Find out more about how the Britons looked; their clothes, jewellery, hairstyles, etc. (Remember to include information about different members of the community (e.g. men/women; rich/poor; warriors/farmers/slaves, etc.). * Compare this with what you have learned about Roman styles and fashions in Britain – prepare a slideshow or PowerPoint to highlight the features of each.
<p>Would all Roman ladies have dressed in the latest fashions like this?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * How did Antonia solve the problem of Bronwen's 'bad hair day'? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - was this a solution that many people could have used? * Were there any dangers attached to using Roman make-up? (Lead oxide?) * Where did all the fancy clothes and jewellery come from? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - wouldn't these have been terribly expensive? - could most ordinary people have afforded them? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Discuss which styles <i>you</i> prefer and why. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - which styles (native or Roman) would have best suited British weather? - which would have been the most expensive (and why)?

<p>Why would <i>Roman's TV</i> suggest that there was such a big difference between Roman and British fashions?</p>	<p>* Did Roman writers & historians try to influence the way we see the Britons today?</p> <p>* Does this still happen in the media today? (think about newspapers & TV programmes).</p>	
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THINKING POINTS – SPORT

COMMENT or ISSUE	THINKING POINTS	IDEAS FOR FOLLOW-UP WORK
<p>Lucia mentioned the ‘10th Anniversary Games’ in the amphitheatre.</p> <p>What 10th anniversary were the games celebrating?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 10th anniversary of what? * Was this something the local British people would want to celebrate? * What types of people would go to the games? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Find out as much as you can about Roman amphitheatre games and, especially, gladiatorial fights. * In groups or as a class, devise a <i>Romans’ TV</i> – style sports report, with interviews, news, results, analysis, etc. <p>This could be presented as a role play, or filmed with video cameras (e.g. Digital Blue).</p>
<p>Sabina wasn’t sure whether the victorious gladiator would accept the ‘rudis’.</p> <p>Why might it be turned down?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * What was the ‘rudis’? What did it mean if you were awarded this? * What sort of people became gladiators? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - what sort of life was it? - what were the pros and cons of being a gladiator? - did women <i>really</i> fight as gladiators? * Why did some gladiators not accept the rudis? 	<p>If filmed, see if you can include titles, credits, background music, etc.</p>

<p>Apart from gladiatorial fights, what other events could you see at the games?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * What kinds of animals might have been hunted? - does this sound like sport? * What was 'harpastum'? * What other sports or leisure activities did the Romans enjoy? 	<p>(NB See <i>The Caerleon Challenge</i> multimedia investigation into the Roman baths at Caerleon to further explore leisure time in Roman Britain: www.newportsouthwales.net/romans)</p>

THINKING POINTS – COOKING

COMMENT or ISSUE	THINKING POINTS	IDEAS FOR FOLLOW-UP WORK
<p>Cornelia talks about servants preparing her food as if every Roman had slaves to cook for them.</p> <p>Was this true?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * What was the difference between servants and slaves? * What sort of people might become slaves? * Did the Romans make much use of slaves? * What type of Roman people would have had slaves? * Did the Britons use slaves before the Roman invasion? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Undertake a ‘Critical Skills’ – style investigation into an aspect or aspects of cooking/diet/health in Roman Britain. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - arrange sources of evidence(like artefacts, pictures, quotes, information,) on various tables, to provide evidence for different aspects of the challenge; - establish an overall challenge, and a research task for each table/aspect of the topic; - working in groups, children spend an allotted time investigating at each table, gathering information and ideas related to each aspect of the challenge; - teacher-led discussion, in which groups feed back information, ideas and opinions on different aspects of the challenge;

<p>What were some of the more unusual foods and dishes that Cornelia had prepared?</p> <p>Where did she get them from?</p>	<p>* e.g. milk-fed snails, peacocks' brains, garum (fish sauce), stuffed dormice, roast flamingo, parrot.</p> <p>- some of these animals did not live in Britain, so where did the Romans get them from and how did they get to Britain?</p> <p>* Was this the sort of food that people would eat every day?</p> <p>* Could everyone in Roman Britain have been able to eat like this?</p>	<p>- evaluation session, in which learners reflect on their group's and/or their own performance and effectiveness in tackling the challenge.</p> <p>* Find out if Roman food was really so different to the food we eat today. (Think about some of the exotic or oriental food we can buy at most supermarkets).</p>
<p>How did Cornelia suggest you could take away the taste of rotten meat?</p>	<p>* Wasn't dangerous just to hide the taste? Couldn't rotten meat make you really ill?</p> <p>- What kinds of doctors or medicines did the Romans have?</p>	

<p>What kinds of equipment and utensils did the Romans need to cook this range of exotic foods?</p>	<p>* What would a Roman kitchen look like?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What were the similarities and differences between Roman kitchens and modern kitchens? - How did they store their food without electricity? - How did Roman food and cooking compare with that of the native Britons? <p>* Compare Roman table manners to ours today:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Did they always use knives & forks? - Do we always use knives & forks? - Did they sit upright at the table to eat? - Was this good for their digestion? 	<p>* NB A visit to St Fagans Celtic Village could furnish valuable opportunities for children to investigate native British cooking and food.</p>
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THINKING POINTS – NEWS

COMMENT or ISSUE	THINKING POINTS	IDEAS FOR FOLLOW-UP WORK
<p>Where is Dacia? Which modern country now occupies this area?</p>	<p>* How did they manage to rule an empire with so many different nations, languages, religions and customs?</p> <p>* Does <i>Romans' TV</i> encourage you to become a Roman citizen?</p> <p>* Why was Roman citizenship such a fantastic reward?</p>	<p>* Find and study a map of the Roman Empire in about AD 100. Compare it with a modern map of the same area and find out which (modern) countries and continents it covered at that time.</p>

<p>Why was the Roman army such a successful fighting unit?</p>	<p>* What were the main reasons for the Roman success?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - training; - organisation; - discipline; - equipment. <p>* Why were the Dacian Falxmen supposedly no match for the Romans?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ill-disciplined; - no armour; - no shield. <p>* <i>Romans' TV</i> also describes the Dacians as 'strong & capable'. Why would the Romans want to give praise to their enemies?</p>	<p>Visit the National Roman Legion Museum at Caerleon and undertake activities to help children find out more about life in the Roman army.</p> <p>Independent or group research into weapons, tactics and training of both Roman soldiers and native Britons. Use PowerPoint, Smart Notebook or similar software to organise and present findings to rest of class.</p>
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<p>The reporter says that most of the fighting was done by Auxiliary soldiers, who were not Romans at all. Why would people who were not Romans want to fight for the Roman Army?</p>	<p>* How long did auxiliaries have to serve for (if they were not killed)?</p> <p>* What were the disadvantages or dangers of joining the Roman army?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - long period of service (25 years); - will always be based far away from home; - will always be in the frontline of any battle; - risk of serious injury or death; - hard, tiring work even when not on campaign or in battle; <p>* What were the potential benefits of serving in the Roman army?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - get to travel to far-off places; - regular food and pay; - serve in a unit with your own countrymen; - good training and equipment; - will have a chance to fight on the winning side this time! - if you survive 25 years, you will be given a grant of land to settle on and make a home (but never in your own country). 	
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THINKING POINTS – ADVERTS

COMMENT or ISSUE	THINKING POINTS	IDEAS FOR FOLLOW-UP WORK
<p>Think about how the Britons and Romans are portrayed in these adverts.</p>	<p>* Can you think of any reasons why the Romans would want to make out that life for the native Britons was so awful?</p> <p>- perhaps they needed to justify why they had invaded Britain and begun to rule over its people;</p> <p>- perhaps they wanted to discourage Britons from rebelling against Roman rule;</p> <p>- perhaps they genuinely wanted the Britons to enjoy a better life and be happier?</p> <p>- perhaps they didn't care about the feelings of the Britons; maybe they were just arrogant people who believed they were better than the Britons?</p>	
<p>Were the Britons really dirty, smelly people who lived in rubbish houses?</p>		
<p>Were the Romans much cleaner, better people who all had fancy homes & fine jewellery?</p>		

Extra activity for the final section.

The Romans did not make television programmes ...

...but at the end of the first century AD there really was a fire in the Roman Fortress at Caerleon. Lots of grain stores were burnt down in the fire and most of the Amphitheatre was damaged.

Nobody really knows how the fire was started.

Write or even film your own report of what might have happened next. Topics you could use for your report might be:

- Who started the fire and how did it happen?
- What happened to the Games after the fire?
- How did the Roman Army react to the fire?