



## ROMAN THEATRE WORKSHEET

The Romans had over 200 public holidays every year, so a lot of entertainment was called for. Spectacular shows involving animals and gladiators were put on in the Colosseum. Chariot races were held in the Circus Maximus. During the intervals in these great spectacles, the crowd was entertained by magicians, bareback riders, trapeze artists, jugglers, clowns, fire-eaters and sword-swallowers.

On around 175 festival days, plays were performed in theatres. These were not as popular as the games or the races, but they still drew huge crowds. Because they didn't have to pay to watch a performance, the audience often left the theatre half way through if they didn't like the play. Once, rumour went round an audience that a gladiator fight was about to begin elsewhere and, within minutes, the theatre was empty.

Roman audiences preferred comedy plays to make them laugh and action plays to give them thrills. In one play, an actor had to play a criminal who is eventually caught and crucified. To give the audience an extra thrill, instead of getting the actor to pretend, a real criminal took his place at the end and was executed in front of the audience.

There were many similarities to the Greek theatre. Masks were worn and popular characters re-appeared in many different plays. There was the wife who always nagged the husband, the silly fool who always wore a pointed hat and the nosy slave who always wore a short tunic and meddled in the affairs of others. Colours were used to help the audience identify the type of character being played. Purple clothes showed a rich man, red a poor man and white a stingy man.

Plautus was a playwright who was famous for writing comedy plays, whereas Seneca was another playwright but he was famous for writing tragedies.





## ROMAN THEATRE QUESTIONS



Once you have finished reading the information about Roman Theatre answer the following questions.

1. Fill in the missing blank(s):
  - a. The Romans needed lots of entertainment because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. Plays were performed on the \_\_\_\_\_ days.
  - c. Audiences could leave the theatre if they didn't like the play because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - d. Roman audiences liked two kinds of plays \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
  - e. In one play, the audience left the theatre because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - f. In another play, a real criminal was \_\_\_\_\_.
2. What were the TWO similarities between Greek and Roman theatre?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
3. Describe THREE stock characters who appeared in Roman theatre.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
4. Describe the type of character who wears the colours listed below
  - a. RED \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. WHITE \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. PURPLE \_\_\_\_\_
5. Who were Plautus and Seneca?  
\_\_\_\_\_.

CHORUS

SENECA

FREE

GODS

ORCHESTRA

DIONYSUS

SENATORS

COMEDY

MASKS

PLOT

TRAGEDY

Fill in the missing blanks:

1. Plautus wrote this type of play:- \_\_\_\_\_
2. A group of people who helped tell the story:- \_\_\_\_\_
3. The God of wine and theatre:- \_\_\_\_\_
4. The cost of going to a Roman play:- \_\_\_\_\_
5. Dionysus was one of these:- \_\_\_\_\_
6. Actors wore these:- \_\_\_\_\_
7. Flat, circular area of a Roman theatre:- \_\_\_\_\_
8. The story of a play:- \_\_\_\_\_
9. Important Romans who sat in the orchestra:- \_\_\_\_\_
10. A Roman playwright:- \_\_\_\_\_

Now find the words in the wordsearch



C	W	H	A	P	O	R	M	U	G	A	S
G	H	G	L	F	T	Y	A	D	O	P	E
D	I	O	N	Y	S	U	S	T	W	R	N
A	T	D	R	B	Z	C	K	Y	C	O	E
S	E	S	X	U	D	V	S	E	U	L	C
R	R	A	R	T	S	E	H	C	R	O	A
O	R	F	A	W	R	O	O	F	T	G	G
T	A	H	M	F	T	A	G	R	A	U	M
A	C	O	P	L	N	O	G	T	I	E	U
N	E	R	S	U	D	O	X	E	N	R	B
E	E	R	F	T	L	R	Y	A	D	S	O
S	L	A	R	E	C	O	M	E	D	Y	P