

# THE COLOSSEUM

**Directions:** Read the following and complete the related questions.

Every Roman town had an amphitheater which was a large stadium in which entertainment and Roman "games" would take place. The largest and most famous Roman amphitheater was the Colosseum in Rome. It is also one of the most famous structures in all of Ancient Rome. It was built between 70 and 80 A.D. and was ordered to be built by Emperor Vespasian who ruled over Rome from 69 to 79 A.D. His family name was "Flavian"; therefore the original name of the Colosseum was the Flavian Amphitheater.



The Colosseum was a masterpiece of architectural design. It was a massive oval building and it could hold up to 50,000 people. The giant stone structure included a massive weight of stone benches for seating which was supported by a series of large arches. As well, the Colosseum included 76 separate entrances that allowed Romans to access the maze of staircases, ramps, arcades and passageways

inside. Under the Colosseum, unseen from the outside, were a series of animal pens and rooms for the gladiators who would participate in the Roman "games". The seating area was covered from the sun by a large, stretched out awning.

Much of the entertainment that took place inside the Colosseum was violent and bloody. The "games" were often paid for by the emperor and were free to attend. It was an important to the political control of the emperor. Not only would the "games" make him popular but it also allowed the Roman people to focus on the violence of the "games" and, as such, they were much less likely to rebel or revolt against the Roman government.

The entertainment inside of the Colosseum consisted mainly of fights between humans and animals. For example, battle between gladiators was a popular form of entertainment that many Romans enjoyed. The Colosseum was large enough that its main area could be flooded and Romans could enjoy re-enacted naval battles.

