

Why did the Romans
organise gladiatorial
games?

HOW DID THE ARRIVAL OF THE ROMANS CHANGE BRITAIN?



These are all Roman murals. What do they show?



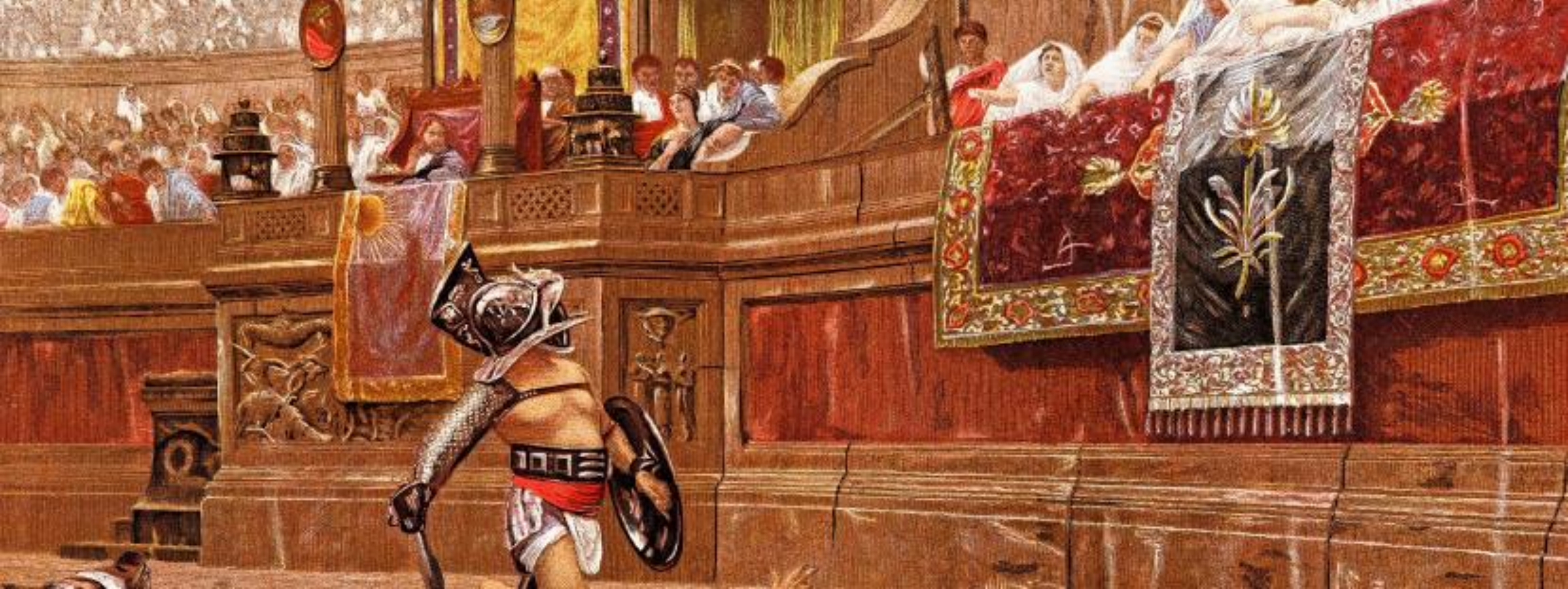
What were these people called?



Lifestyle of the rich and famous

Wealthy Romans such as senators, governors, noblemen, army generals and even the Emperor himself would provide these gladiators for entertainment to the less fortunate people who lived and worked in the towns and surrounding countryside.

Gladiatorial games would be organised once a month in the big towns, at the games food and drink would be handed out for free. Unsurprisingly the games were so popular that people would camp out overnight to ensure they could get into the games the following morning.



The Colosseum

Games could last anytime from a day to a week depending on the wealth of the sponsor. In the largest amphitheatres such as the Colosseum, the Emperor would have as many as 80,000 people watching the games!

During the games, gladiators were paired up to fight either each other or wild animals, such as lions or bears. Gladiators were mostly slaves, condemned criminals, prisoners of war, soldiers who had lacked bravery on the battlefield or deserted and Christians who had been arrested for encouraging people to believe in Jesus Christ and his teachings rather than the many Roman gods. The fighting was always brutal and often ended in the death of one of the gladiators, but not always. If the crowd considered that the defeated gladiator had shown strength, skill and courage, they would shout loudly for the sponsor to spare him his life and raise upright thumbs. Both victorious and spared gladiators would return again to fight new opposition. On average, a victorious gladiator only survived seven or eight further contests. See the short video from the Royal Ontario Museum called *Life in Rome: Gladiators* at www.youtube.com/watch?v=wiEWMTQrxX8

Gladiators

Gladiators were owned by an *ianista* (pronounced *lanista*) and trained at his gladiator school. An *ianista* could become very wealthy by persuading the organiser or sponsor of the games, such as a senator or even the emperor, that his gladiators would provide the best entertainment for the crowds because they were the strongest, fittest and most skilled combatants available. The games sponsor would then hire them from the *ianista* to perform for as long as the games (or the gladiators) lasted. Victorious gladiators would return to their *ianista* and school to be prepared for the next games. In order to increase the chances of his gladiators succeeding at and surviving the games, the *ianista* would treat them well, including giving them nutritious food and comfortable living quarters. A web search for 'Gladiator Superpowers' and 'Gladiator Schools' will source a number of films which provide further background information about the preparation and training of gladiators, which can be shown with discretion to the pupils.

Gladiators and their owners...

Sponsorship

Your task is to imagine you're an lanista who owns a gladiator school and you need sponsorship.

Create a persuasion poster to lure sponsors away from the other gladiator school in the town and instead to sponsor yours...focus on why you produce the best gladiators!

Consider the list > when creating your poster.

- a suitable name for their gladiatorial school
- the inclusion of a compelling image – perhaps of your school's most famous gladiator
- reasons why you produce the finest gladiators – those who are the bravest, fittest and best trained – that the crowds will thrill to
- the very reasonable prices you charge for a day, week or month of games
- great successes that some of your gladiators have achieved in previous games
- testimonial quotes from previous important sponsors such as the emperor saying how pleased they were with the gladiators you provided and how they would hire from you again.