Pearson Lesson Plan

**Roman Slavery Text Based Discussion**

**Standards:**

PA History 8.4 C Analyze how continuity and change throughout history has impacted belief systems and religions, commerce and industry, innovations, settlement patterns, social organization, transportation and roles of women before 1500.

PA World History 8.4 D Analyze how conflict and cooperation among social groups and organizations impacted world history through 1500 in Africa, Americas, Asia and Europe.

**Objectives:** SWBAT

* Use evidence from a text to discuss slavery under the Roman Empire
* Summarize what they learned from the class discussion on slavery under the Roman Empire

**Materials:**

* Pencils, Notebooks, Folders
* Roman Slavery Handout
* Discussion Organizer

**Anticipatory Set:** (5 min)

Students will answer the following question in their notebook:

“Do you think the Romans were right to force prisoners of war into slavery? Why or why not?”

When students have finished writing, briefly discuss responses.

**Procedures:** (30 min)

*Classroom Set Up* – For this discussion, the class will be set up in a circle, so that all students are facing each other.

*Discussion Preparation* – Students are expected to have read the text *Slavery in the Ancient Roman Empire* in preparation for today’s discussion. As they read, students were to complete a graphic organizer, and to consider the following:

Key Understandings:

* The Romans would enslave the people of captured lands, as well as those who failed to register for the army or census.
* The conditions for field slaves were so harsh that their life expectancy was 10 years. It was cheaper to purchase new slaves than take care of the ones you had.
* The life of urban slaves was often much better than rural slaves, because they were seen as a reflection of their master.

Misconceptions:

* Slavery in Rome was the same in America. Response: Roman slaves were taken as prisoners of war, whereas African Slaves were simply taken from their land. Roman slaves also performed a wider variety of jobs than African slaves.
* Roman Slaves were African. Response: Many of the slaves were taken from conquered land, so slaves could be European, African, or Middle Eastern.

*Rules of Discussion -* The rules for discussion will be made clear to the students before we begin.

* Only one person is permitted to speak at a time
* It is not required for students to raise hands, but we will move to that if they cannot take turns speaking
* Students must be respectful to others opinions and responses.

Launch:

I will launch the discussion by asking students what types of jobs the Romans gave their slaves, and how those jobs contributed to the Empire. Once we establish this basis, we can move onto more open-ended questions.

1. Discussion with the whole class:

Discussion will flow from the following questions:

* How did the Romans treat their slaves?
* How fair was this treatment?
* How might the way Romans treated their slaves justify the practice?
* How can we connect slavery in Rome to the trans-Atlantic slave trade, as well as modern slavery?
1. As students discuss the topic, they should add thoughts of their classmates to their graphic organizer.

**Closing:** (5 min)

On the back of the graphic organizer, have students answer the following question – “What is one thing you learned about Roman slavery that you did not know coming into the discussion?”

If time permits, have students share responses.

**Assessment:**

Assessment will be based on student participation in the discussion. There will be two aspects to participation. While students are expected to offer their thoughts, not all students will talk during discussion. Because of this, they will be able to earn participation points both through speaking, as well as though completion of a graphic organizer.

Roman Slavery Text:

**Slavery in the Ancient Roman Empire**

In the Ancient Roman Empire, slavery was either a result of captivity or punishment for rejecting government rule. As new land was acquired, the population of the area became the property of the Roman Empire. The captives of the land either joined the other slaves of the republic who had been captured, or become slaves because they had failed to enlist in the army or register in the census.

Once the slaves were acquired, they were sold at slave auctions under the jurisdiction of government officials. Slaves with special talents were sold for higher prices, and female slaves were cheaper than males. It was cheaper to purchase new slaves than to breed more, and so the slave auctions were always highly populated and well attended.

The Roman slaves were treated as members of the family unit in the earlier days of slavery; their punishments were mild, and they were given holidays from their regular duties on certain occasions and festivals. On the Festival of Saturn, the slaves were allowed to wear the badge of freedom for the day. They were given freedom of speech, a banquet where their masters served them, and they were given the clothes of their masters to wear. Slaves were often buried in the familial plots of their masters, and masters would be punished severely for the murder of their slaves. Families of slaves could not be separated, but there was no legal relation between a father and his son. The children born to a slave mother were also slaves, and slaves could hold no property as all their possessions belonged to their master.

Slaves performed a wide variety of different jobs, ranging from economic, to field labor, to being forced into gladiatorial combat. Making up the largest percentage of the slave population were the field hands who constituted the major work force on the large agricultural and mining farms of the Roman aristocracy. On one estate alone, as many as 40,000 slaves could be kept, forced to work in extreme conditions. As a result of this, however, field slaves provided Rome with its greatest source of economic wealth.

Rural slaves were forced to do work that was both physically and emotionally straining. Field hands were given a life expectancy of about ten years due to the physical exhaustion they encountered on a daily basis. Among the jobs they were expected to perform were as ploughmen, hunters, ditchers and forester. Slaves were expected to work all day on very little food and water, and were whipped or beaten when they did not. The extreme nature of the environment in which rural slaves lived is best exemplified by the number of slave revolts that resulted from rural area as opposed to urban areas.

If one was to be a slave, to work in the household of an upper-class aristocrat was ideal. Under many circumstances, the oldest and most trusted slaves were considered to be a part of the family. Furthermore, urban slaves were given better food and clothing in addition to their daily tasks being much less demanding. Urban slaves were chosen for several reasons, but many for their skills such as sculpture or cobbling. There were, however, slaves, especially young boys, who were employed only for their looks as it was considered a symbol of wealth and status to keep beautiful children as slaves. There were, of course, many other jobs for domestic slaves such as cook and footman. Some households were known to have as many as fifty different types of slaves, who would perform duties sometimes as specific as being in charge of purple garments.

From all standpoints, house slaves were given many more opportunities than field slaves. Cooks were allowed to take home leftovers from their master's table, children were given clothing made of fine materials, etc...simply because house slaves were considered to be a reflection of the master himself, and offered him a chance to further display his status.

*Adapted from “Roman Slavery, Gladiators, and the Spartacus Revolt.” Historyteacher.net*

**Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Slavery in Rome Graphic Organizer:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| General Notes | Aspects of Urban Slavery | Aspects of Rural Slavery |
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