

Roamin' at the Forum

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Overview

Topic: Roman Cities and Architecture. The purpose of this lesson is to help students identify features of ancient Roman cities and explain how the Romans have influenced our modern cities.

Length of Lesson

Three 90-minute lessons, including an assessment activity

Video/Technology Hardware & Software

Roman City #1, People and Society 
 TV/VCR preferably with remote control
 Internet virtual field trip and research
 Overhead projector
 Computer lab with Internet access

Web Applications

Students will undertake research and virtual field trips using the following websites:

trackstar.hprtec.org track number 39811 titled "The Roman Forum and the American City." (The Post-Viewing Activities are included on the track.)

Another option is to access each website separately:

library.thinkquest.org/11402/homeforum.html
www.nycvisit.com/maps.html
www.ci.houston.tx.us
www.houston-guide.com
sc94.ameslab.gov/TOUR/tour.html
www.dchomepage.net

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to:

- identify the structure and architecture of ancient Roman cities
- compare the features of Roman cities to our modern cities

(This lesson addresses Va. SOL History and Social Studies 8.4 and Computer/Technology 8.4)

Materials and Teacher Preparations

- a sheet of graph paper for each group of no more than three students.
- blank transparency for each group and one for the teacher
- a paper clip for each group and one for the teacher
- a transparency marker for each group and one for the teacher
- a copy of the worksheet for the pre-viewing and viewing activities for each student
- a transparency of the worksheet for the teacher
- posters showing skyline views of several major cities such as LA, New York, or Chicago
- copies of the charts for the post-viewing activities for each student or group, depending on whether the post-viewing will be done in groups or individually



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- addresses and phone numbers for resources on New York, Houston, and D.C. if computers with Internet access are not available.

New York
Greater New York Chamber of Commerce
350 Fifth Avenue Suite 3304
New York, NY 10118
(212) 244-0003
info@chamber.com

New York State Department of Economic Development
1-800-CALLNYC

The Manhattan Club
200 West 56th Street
New York, NY 10019

New York City & Company
1-800-NYC-VISIT
nycvb@directfulfillment.net

Houston
Greater Houston Convention & Visitors Bureau
901 Bagby
Houston, TX 77002

Washington, D.C.
Washington, D.C. The American Experience
(202) 789-7009

Preparatory/Pre-Viewing Activities

Give each group of no more than three students a sheet of graph paper and a blank transparency attached with a paper clip and a transparency marker. Instruct each group to sketch out a rendering of the main part of their closest city or town. The graph paper should be used as a guide to keep the streets fairly straight. If students do not understand which part of town you mean, suggest that they draw the part of town that contains the hospital, main branches of banks, and the courthouse. Try to avoid saying "downtown" because you want them to arrive at that on their own.

Allow students no more than ten minutes to collaborate on this. Then have each group share their transparencies on the overhead projector and explain what they have indicated.

Focus for Viewing/Other Technology

Tell students: Today we are going to learn about Roman cities and compare them with our modern cities. Give each student a copy of the worksheet. Ask students to brainstorm buildings and structures that we have in American cities. Tell students that they can draw on the places that we just pointed out in our town. Paper clip your blank transparency to your transparency of the worksheet. Record the answers that the students come up with in the column under the heading "modern American cities," and have them keep up with the list on their papers, too. Useful responses could include theaters, stadiums, banks, hotels, malls, gyms, churches, etc. You may need to probe students if they do not produce some of these responses.

Pause vs. Stop

When using a video interactively with students, teachers need to decide when to use **PAUSE** and when to use **STOP**. **PAUSE** the video when the anticipated discussion or activity will take less than two minutes. **STOP** for longer periods. Pausing for too long at one time can cause video heads on the VCR to become clogged which may require cleaning to correct.

Viewing and/or Online Activities

- Show students the posters of skyline views of some modern American cities. Discuss with the students what they see that can be added to the list. Students should come up with responses such as bridges, power lines, streets, etc.
- Tell students that next we will see a video that will help us compare ancient Roman cities to our own modern cities. **START Roman City #1** and cue it to approximately 1:06 where the wall painting is

being shown and the narrator has just finished saying, "...one of the world's most influential civilizations."

Time Cues

To synchronize your VCR with the time cues that are included with this lesson, zero/reset your time counter at the very beginning of the program, before the introduction and titles. Time cues are expressed as "minutes:seconds;" for example, 3:15 means three minutes and fifteen seconds.

3. FOCUS: Tell students to make a list of buildings and structures that they hear mentioned that could be found in Roman cities on their worksheet under the heading "Roman cities." **PLAY** until the opening credits begin and **STOP**. Ask for student responses (temples, stadiums, roads, bridges, etc.) and add them to the overhead transparency of the worksheet.

4. FAST FORWARD to approximately 3:15 to where a map of the empire is shown and the narrator has just finished saying "...its provinces and territories contributed heavily to the wealth and status of the city of Rome." **FOCUS:** Tell the students to look closely at the Rome model and have them add the structures that they see to the list on their worksheet under the heading, "Roman city." **RESUME**. **STOP** the video at approximately 4:30 where the narrator is sitting on the wall and has just finished saying, "...would alter the character of the land and the world of its people forever." Elicit student responses (roads, temples, theaters, etc.). At this point ask students if they are starting to see any similarities in the Roman and American cities. Students should be able to point out that there are some similar items on the lists such as the roads, bridges, theaters, stadiums, temples (churches), etc. Students may note that there are some structures that the Romans used that go by the names we use for them, but in some instances we use different names than did the Romans.

5. FOCUS: Tell students to listen to the answer to the question, "What was the layout of the Roman city?" **RESUME** the video and **PAUSE** as soon as

the narrator says, "But this is what it would once have looked like." Elicit the proper answer (grid), write it on the overhead, and have students write it in the appropriate place on their worksheets.

6. FOCUS: Ask students to listen for the answer to the question, "Where were the major public buildings?" **RESUME** the video and **PAUSE** after the narrator says, "...with the major public buildings laid out in the center, or forum." Elicit the response (center, forum), write it on the overhead, and have students write the answer.

7. FOCUS: Ask students to listen for the answer to the question, "What protected the city?" **RESUME** the video and **PAUSE** when the narrator says, "...and ensured the protection of the gods from all its inhabitants." Elicit the response (walls), write it on the overhead, and have students write the answer.

8. FOCUS: Ask students to listen for the answer to the question, "What was the forum?" **RESUME** the video and **PAUSE** at approximately 6:02 when the narrator has just finished saying "As you can see, it's still pretty much the center of things." Elicit the answer from the students (focal point of commerce and local politics), write it on the overhead, and have them write the answer.

9. FOCUS: Tell students to listen carefully to the narrator as he tells what the area around the forum consisted of. **RESUME** the tape and **STOP** at 6:30 when the narrator has just finished saying, "...linked this city with Rome itself," and flips to his notepad. Elicit students responses (market, shops, court, government buildings, temples), write them on the overhead, and have students write the answers. At this point ask students what part of our American city the forum reminds them of. (downtown) You may have to probe for the correct response by reminding students of what the forum consisted of and ask them what we have that reminds them of those places. If you did not have to probe, ask students why they responded as they did. Possible responses should include that our downtowns have schools (usually universities or extensions), civic centers, the courthouse, police station, shops, town or city hall, and sometimes the largest church of a

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particular denomination, and business headquarters, as did the forum. Record the answers on the overhead and have students write the answers on their papers.

Post-Viewing and/or Online Activities

Have students go to trackstar.hprtec.org for instructions on the post-viewing activities and assessment choices or direct students to the websites previously.

The procedure for the post-viewing activity is for students to take a virtual field trip to a Roman forum and record on the included chart the name of each building in the forum and its function. In the next step students should visit three modern American cities and complete a chart for each that will help them contrast and compare the contents of each with the Roman city. The chart should indicate the structure or building in the American city, the part of the forum similar to the building or structure, and the part of town that the modern building is in. Students may use the included charts or create their own on spreadsheet software. The objective is that students should see that the forum was very much like the modern downtown.

If computers with Internet access are not available, the teacher should secure print materials from the library or other sources on three major cities or write to travel bureaus and chambers of commerce of three cities for information with which the students can make their comparisons.

Assessment

The teacher may use one or any combination of assessments or allow students to choose.

1. Students may create a diagram in which they display the similarities and differences between the features of the modern American and Roman city.
2. Write an essay in which you contrast and compare the structure of the Roman city to the modern American city and the present location of the forum's features.

3. Create a poster in which you pick one city or represent all three. The poster should creatively display buildings or structures that are the modern equivalents of features of the Roman forum with a description for each. Include a picture of the building or structure that housed the same function in the Roman forum. This assessment could be taken a step further by having students make a power point presentation instead of a poster.

Action Plan

1. Ask a city planner or civil engineer to come to your class and discuss how zoning and planning in cities is done in the modern day.
2. Take students on a field trip to downtown area of the closest city or town to visit places that correspond to the Roman forum such as the market and courthouse.

Extensions

Art: Have students create models of the Roman forum.

English/ Literature: Students can study the mythology of the Roman gods and goddesses in relation to each deity having a temple at one forum or another.

Building and Trades: Have students identify the types of building materials used by the Romans (stone, then later concrete) and types of structures (columns, arches) in relation to the effectiveness of the methods and their use today.

About the Author

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Amy Cummings is a social studies teacher at Franklin County High School. She is a graduate of Averett College in Danville, Va. She is currently working toward a master's degree in Educational Media Technology and Library Media at Radford University. In her spare time she enjoys cooking, reading, hiking, and travel.

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Pre-viewing and Viewing Activities

modern American city

Roman cities

1. What was the layout of the Roman city?
2. Where were the major public buildings?
3. What protected the city?
4. What was the forum?
5. What did the area around the forum consist of?

6. What part of our modern city does the forum sound like?

Why?

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Roman Forum Virtual Field Trip

Building/ Structure

Function

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Comparison of forum to _____

Building/ Structure

Forum's Counterpart

part of the city