



Big Era Four
Expanding Networks of Exchange and Encounter
1200 BCE – 500 CE



Closeup Teaching Unit 4.5.1
Roman Art and Architecture
500 BCE – 400 CE

[PowerPoint Presentation](#)
[Roman Art and Architecture](#)

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World History for Us All
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Why this unit?

All **complex societies** have created art as an expression of their experience. Yet works of art, examined as historical artifacts and **primary sources**, can tell us a much larger story about the history of the people who created them.

For historians, art has left behind important artifacts that help us draw conclusions about the history of human identity. Art helps us understand humans and their ideas. A single work of art can act as “snapshot” of a society at a particular time and place. Art can show us what people looked like, what they worshiped, the ideas they valued, and what they considered beautiful. Art is also a way in which people can relate political messages and persuade others through propaganda.

Art may also relate the story of how humans have formed and used networks of trade and exchange. The exchange of cultural ideas has been crucial to human development. Roman art would have been much less rich if not for the cultural diffusion of art and artists from the peoples they interacted with and those they conquered. Roman art tells us a story of how societies borrow and build off the ideas of other societies. Roman art is, to a large extent, a culmination of ideas borrowed, built off, and “stolen” from other societies, particularly the Greeks.

Unit objectives

Upon completing this unit, students will be able to:

1. Explain how Romans copied and borrowed styles in art and architecture from other societies, particularly the Greeks.
2. Explain how ancient Romans contributed to art and architecture.
3. Describe Roman achievements in art, including realistic portraits, coinage, glassware, cameos, mummy paintings, and mosaics.
4. Describe Roman achievements in architecture including public baths, the Colosseum, and the Pantheon.
5. Explain how art can be used as a tool of political propaganda.
6. Compare and contrast Roman with Greek art and architecture.
7. Analyze how the classical style of Greek and Roman art and architecture has influenced modern art and architecture.

Time and materials

This unit is designed both for teachers who would like to cover the topic in depth and for those preferring more limited classroom investigation. Teachers are encouraged to “pick and choose” what best fits their schedules. Teachers may devote classroom time ranging from three to seven periods.

Materials required for teachers include an LCD projector for showing the PowerPoint presentation associated with this unit (See **Classical Connections: From Roman Art and**

Architecture to Today). Those who do not have an LCD projector may print out the presentation for overhead presentation.

Materials required for students include a pen or pencil and a history notebook. Students may need one or all of the following to complete the assessment projects at the end of the unit: construction paper, colored pencils and/or markers, glue, scissors, a digital camera, access to a computer and the Internet.

Author

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The historical context

The Power of Rome

In 509 BCE the Roman republic was founded. Over a period of four centuries, the Roman empire expanded until it conquered the entire Mediterranean basin. The unifying of the empire included the conquest of Etruscans, Greeks, Egyptians, Berbers, Gauls, and Syrians, among others. At its height, around 100 CE, the empire covered a land area of approximately 1,698,400 square miles. Its peak of prosperity during the *Pax Romana*, or Roman peace, extended well into the third century CE.

For a long time, the city of Rome was the empire's most powerful city as well as the capital. In terms of art and architecture, the city was not only the largest site of art production but for centuries it received a constant stream of the spoils of war from all over the Mediterranean region.

Art as War Plunder

The plunder of Greek artworks by the Romans is a fact of history. During the late third century BCE, Roman conquest brought in the spoils of war by the shipload and cartload. Artworks were brought into the empire as a result of pillaging, tribute collecting, purchase, and commission. Victory parades of Roman generals included, among other things, Greek art. Perhaps one of the best known conquests and looting of art was the triumph of L. Aemilius Paullus, who defeated the last ruler of Macedon in 168 BCE. Returning to Rome with one of the largest collections of booty ever gathered, he led a public parade of statues, paintings, and colossal images loaded on 250 wagons. Still another military campaign led to the looting of the entire city of Corinth in Greece. Everything of value was carted off and taken to Rome. This pattern of pillage was repeated, almost annually, as the empire expanded.

Archeological evidence of the movement of art from Greece to Rome has been provided by a number of ancient shipwrecks. One such find was the shipwreck discovered in 1901 under sixty meters of water at the southern tip of the Peloponnese in mainland Greece. The ship was carrying

such artwork as pottery, glass, amphoras, gold bars, and almost a hundred sculptures in bronze and marble.

Patrons of the Arts

The patrons of Roman art were numerous: they included emperors, private citizens, and those who traded with Rome. Many art pieces came to adorn public or [state](#) buildings, baths, porticoes, and temples. The display of public art around Rome also functioned as political propaganda. Statues of the emperor would serve as constant reminders of the emperor's power and authority. Other artworks were sold off at public auction to decorate the houses of the rich and powerful. Perhaps the most famous and well-documented collections of Roman art owned by private citizens are the artworks of affluent families found in the villas of the seaside communities of Pompeii and Herculaneum. The modern excavations of Pompeii and Herculaneum, which were buried after the eruption of Mt Vesuvius in 79 CE, have provided historians with some of the best examples of art from both Roman and Greek antiquity.

Additionally, Roman collectors provided an eager market for sculptors, workshops, and dealers in the eastern empire. The imitation and copies of Greek works proliferated. Rome became a major hub of trade, connecting people of lands from across large areas of [Afroeurasia](#). Consumers, patrons, and artists had an array of choices in artwork.

Cultural Borrowing and Cultural Expansion

Roman expansion affected not only the conquered societies but also the Romans. The Romans borrowed ideas from the Etruscans, who had distinctive artistic styles, religious rituals, deities, and the technology of arch and aqueduct building. Arguably, the most famous contribution of the Etruscans to the Romans was the weight-bearing arch. The Etruscans, in turn, borrowed the idea of the arch from countries to the east of the Roman empire. Its use in ancient Assyria in [Southwest Asia](#) was evident in doorways, gateways, drains, and palaces.

Greek influences on Rome were even greater. Many of Rome's aristocratic landowners were influenced by Hellenistic art, architecture, philosophy, medicine, and religion. Rome later became the center from where Hellenistic culture diffused across the western Mediterranean and Europe. Cities in Gaul, Iberia, North Africa, and other lands arose as miniature "Romes," with temples, amphitheaters, baths, and arenas for gladiatorial combats. Thus, ultimately, the Roman empire's political expansion in all directions became a cultural expansion as well.

Timeline of important events for the Roman empire and Roman art

BCE

753	Legendary date of the founding of Rome
510-509	Rome became a republic
ca. 510	Etruscans expelled from Rome
270	Rome achieved control of entire Italian Peninsula
197-146	Rome conquered Greece
50-40	Wall paintings created in the Villa of Mysteries in Pompeii
ca. 50s–30s	Eastern Mediterranean craftsmen introduced glassblowing technologies to the Italian Peninsula
44	Julius Caesar assassinated
30	Rome conquered most of Egypt
27	Octavian, renamed “Augustus,” became Rome’s first emperor, heralding the end of the Roman Republic

CE

ca. 5	Birth of Jesus in Bethlehem
ca. 30	Crucifixion of Jesus
41-54	Rome conquered Britain and portraits of emperors were worshiped as gods
79	Mt Vesuvius erupted and buried the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum
72-96	Roman Colosseum designed and built
ca. 110-113	Trajan’s Column and Forum under construction in Rome
117-138	Emperor Hadrian built a wall across Britain
118-125	Pantheon built in Rome
410	Western Roman empire declined amid unrest
1738-9	Excavations at Herculaneum began
1748	Excavations at Pompeii began
1831	<i>Alexander Mosaic</i> discovered in the House of the Faun in Pompeii

This unit in the Big Era Timeline



**Bronze Statue in Rome of the emperor
Marcus Aurelius 161-180 CE**

Photo by R. Dunn

Lesson 1

An Overview of Roman Art and Architecture

Preparation

Teachers should make a class set of copies of Student Handouts 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 to complete this lesson. Students should have some background knowledge on the [civilizations](#) of Greece and Rome to be able to better interpret the topics they will study in this unit. It is suggested that this unit be taught towards the middle or end of a unit on Rome to maximize student understanding.

Introduction

This first lesson on Roman art and architecture will provide students with a brief survey of the topic. During this lesson, prior knowledge students may already have on the topic will be shared. The teacher will also extend upon this by building background knowledge for more in-depth readings on Roman art and architecture that will be covered in Lesson 2.

Activities

Building on prior knowledge

Before beginning the lessons in this unit, find out what students already know about the topic of art and architecture in general. Possible questions to ask students for discussion or as a warm-up activity might include:

- What is art? What is architecture?
- Why do you think people create art?
- What do you already know about art in ancient times?
- What can historians learn about different societies by examining their art?

Overview of Roman art and architecture

Next, read Student Handout 1.1 (An Overview of Roman Art and Architecture). The handout could be read aloud as a class. Students may answer the discussion questions at the end of the reading in their history notebook on their own, or the teacher may call on participants to go over the answers and use them as a basis for further discussion.

Vocabulary Development

As with each topic studied in world history, there are a number of specialized vocabulary terms students need to be familiar with to understand the topic of Roman art and architecture. Student Handout 1.2 (Terms to Know for Roman Art and Architecture) gives a listing of terms and definitions most pertinent to the topic. Teachers may wish to modify this list based on the background knowledge and reading levels of the students. Student Handout 1.3 may be used as a basic template for students to put the definitions for this topic into their own words, as well as to create a visual clue for each word. Teachers may make multiple copies of this template for each student depending on the number of terms assigned.

Lesson 1

Student Handout 1.1— An Overview of Roman Art and Architecture

The Greek Influence on Rome

During the Republic, Romans founded a new empire on the ruins of Hellenistic kingdoms. It was during this time that stolen statues and other works of art came to Rome from Greece. Roman patrons of the arts imported Greek artists to create new items modeled after Greek styles. Rome soon became a center for wealthy collectors of Greek art.

Other Influences on Roman Art and Architecture

Some scholars have suggested that Roman art was merely a copy of Greek art forms, but Roman art is actually the product of a variety of cultural influences. As the Romans conquered other lands, they were influenced by the artwork of those who fell under their rule. The Etruscans, the forerunners of the founders of Rome, inspired Roman artists. Ancient Egypt and other complex societies that the Roman empire bordered influenced art styles as well. Greek artists originally borrowed many of their styles from the Egyptians. Thus Roman art was also influenced indirectly by the work of Egyptians.

The Significance of Pompeii and Herculaneum

Some of the most famous artifacts of Roman artwork come to us via the collections of wealthy families who lived in the seaside communities of Pompeii and Herculaneum. In 79 CE, a violent volcanic eruption occurred at Mt Vesuvius. It covered these two cities completely in volcanic ash, and almost everyone was killed by the eruption. Centuries later, [archaeologists](#) excavated many artifacts of Roman art and architecture. Several houses and villas in these towns had wall paintings and floor mosaics. The excavations have provided historians with some of the best examples of art and a wealth of knowledge about the creation of artwork from Greece and Rome.

The Significance of Art and Architecture

Art may tell us much about the lives of the people who created it. We can learn about the values, culture, and history of a people by examining their art. The Romans used art to honor the gods, celebrate events, and show the power of the emperor and Rome. Moreover, Roman art was used as a tool of propaganda and persuasion. Emperors, for instance, put statues of themselves in public places for everyone to see and admire. Public buildings were also used as propaganda to increase the popularity of the emperors who built them. By having the same style of architecture in domes, arches, columns, and aqueducts in different lands throughout the empire, people were reminded that the Romans were in charge.

The Roman Contribution to Art and Architecture

Were the Romans merely thieves of the art of the Greeks and others? Or did they add original innovations to the art and architecture they created? There are several original contributions the Romans made by borrowing and building on styles of those who influenced them. The Romans created a type of portraiture known as “realistic.” The features on “realistic” portraits, however,

were “ideal,” and included both abstract and conventional elements, as well as details of actual appearance. The Romans put the portraits of famous people, such as emperors, on their coins. They discovered how to make cameos in the form of reliefs carved into glass that featured an image of an individual’s head. The Roman technique of glassblowing to make glassware is still used today.

The Romans were masters in creating architectural masterpieces, many of which still stand today. Roads, aqueducts, public baths, and arches can still be visited throughout what was once the Roman empire. Both the Colosseum and the Pantheon are landmarks in monumental architecture and are still popular tourist attractions today.

The Romans contributed much to our knowledge of Greek art history because of the preservation of the styles of the Greeks. Many surviving monuments of Greek sculpture are Roman copies of lost or destroyed Greek bronze originals. Most of the knowledge we have of Greek painting comes from later Roman versions. The classical world of Greece and Rome ended almost 1,500 years ago, yet the classical style lives on. By looking at many of the architectural features of our national government buildings in Washington, D.C., the impact of classical art becomes evident. Our White House, Capitol Building, and presidential memorials have been influenced by Roman architecture.

Questions for Discussion:

1. How did Greek art come to Rome?
2. Besides the Greeks, what other cultural traditions influenced Roman art and architecture?
3. Why is Pompeii important to historians studying Roman art?
4. How and why did the Romans use art as propaganda?
5. What original contributions did Romans make to art and architecture?
6. What knowledge did Romans contribute to art history?
7. Why do you think that some public architecture in Washington, DC, is modeled after Roman architecture?

Lesson 1***Student Handout 1.2—Terms to Know for Roman Art and Architecture***

Amphitheater	A theater that hosts entertainment performances.
Aqueduct	A pipe or channel transporting water either above or below ground.
Architecture	The art of designing and constructing buildings.
Art	Any object subject to aesthetic criteria, such as paintings, sculptures, or drawings.
Artist	A person who creates art for herself or for public enjoyment.
Bath	A public meeting place for Romans with pools of hot and cold water. Baths were a form of recreation where people could socialize and relax.
Cameo	A relief carving in which details stand out from a background.
Casting	Producing a sculpture or glasswork into a particular shape by pouring it into a mold in a fluid state and letting it harden.
Classical	Art or architecture made or inspired by the ancient Greeks or Romans.
Coinage	The art of minting (making) coins out of bronze, silver, or gold and decorating them with portraits or other images.
Decoration	The act or process of decorating, adorning, or embellishing.
Dome	A vault rising up from a round base and usually shaped like one half of a hollow ball.
Glassware	Objects made out of glass and used for tableware, perfume containers, funerary urns, transport vessels, and <i>tesserae</i> , that is, pieces of glass for mosaics.

Hellenistic	Cultural styles influenced by ancient Greek ideas, architecture, and art. From the Hellenic, referring to that which is Greek. The start of the Hellenistic era is associated with the conquests of Alexander the Great in the fourth century BCE.
Idealized	To represent something in an ideal or perfect form.
Mosaic	A picture or design made of small pieces of colored stone, glass, tile, or brick called <i>tesserae</i> .
Patron	One who buys, acquires, or sponsors the creation of artwork.
Portrait	A picture or sculpture of a person or group of people.
Propaganda	The spreading of ideas to influence or persuade people.
Public art	Art displayed in public places for all to see and enjoy.
Realistic	A kind of portraiture created by the Romans.
Sculpture	The art of shaping figures or designs in the round or in relief by chiseling marble, modeling clay, or casting a metal.
Subject	The central person or image in an artwork.

Lesson 1***Student Handout 1.3—Terms to Know for Roman Art and Architecture***

Word	Summarize the definition in your own words.	Draw a picture that symbolizes this word.

Lesson 2

Readings on Roman Art and Architecture

Preparation

Students should have already completed Lesson 1 before doing the readings in this section. The teacher should make multiple copies of each of the nine readings, Student Handouts 2.1- 2.9, so that students can complete them in cooperative workgroups. Students will also need Student Handouts 2.10 and 2.11, their own copies of the templates for taking notes.

Introduction

In this lesson, students will acquire a deeper understanding of specific Roman achievements in the areas of art and architecture by completing nine different readings on select topics. In the area of Roman art, students will read and learn about realistic portraits, cameos, coinage, glassware, mosaics, and mummy paintings. To learn more about Roman architecture, students will complete readings on Roman baths, the Colosseum, and the Pantheon. Students should take sufficient notes on each of the readings using the templates provided in Student Handouts 2.10 and 2.11. These notes will also be used to complete the end of the unit assessment contained in Lesson 3.

Activities

Students should be arranged in small cooperative learning groups of three or four. They should use the templates in Student Handouts 2.10 and 2.11 to take notes. They will draw a visual for each of the topics and evaluate how this form of art is still evident in modern art and architecture.

The preferred method for teachers with sufficient time for this lesson is to require each cooperative learning group to complete all of the readings in this section, Student Handouts 2.1 – 2.9. At the end of the class period, have each group share the last reading it is completing and responses to the “Questions for Discussion” located at the end of each reading. Teachers with less time, who may not wish to go on to the assessment portion of this unit, may choose to have students complete a select number of readings using a favorite group-work reading strategy. For instance, the students in each group may become experts on one of the readings and give a short oral presentation to the entire class by answering the “Question for Discussion” at the end. Or each student in the cooperative work-group may become an expert on one reading and present it to the rest of the group.

Lesson 2

Student Handout 2.1—Realistic Portraits

Images of people are called portraits. Many portraits were carved into statues, but portraits were also made into cameos, coins, and paintings. In a portrait, an artist may depict the head or bust, half body, or full figure of a person.

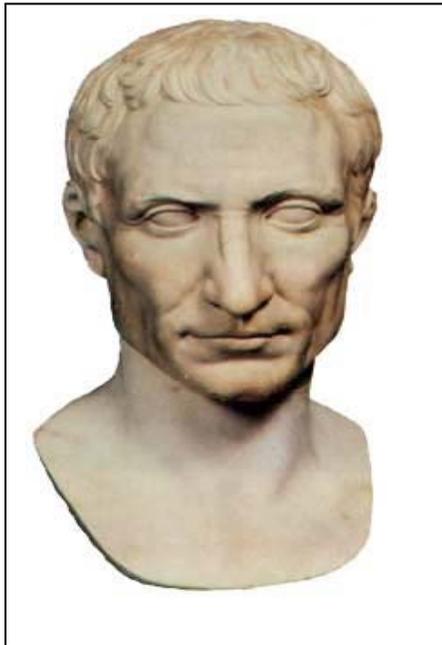
The Romans created “realistic” portraits, but they believed that portraits should convey higher truths, so they were not actually “real.” These portraits used abstract and conventional elements as well as details of actual appearance, such as wrinkles and thinning hair. They were therefore in a sense “ideal.”

Augustus and other emperors had an image carefully crafted as they wanted it to be seen by all. These images, that is, their portraits, appeared on statues, cameos, and coins, among other objects, and functioned as political propaganda for the Roman citizenry. Many of the emperors’ statues were put in public places for everyone to see, and they became a constant visual reminder of who was in power. Each statue contained an inscription, that is, a text that described the achievements of the emperor. Many politicians also placed their statues, with inscriptions, in public places. Adding an inscription was a distinctive Roman practice.

Questions for Discussion

- 1) What was a realistic portrait?
- 2) How were portraits used as propaganda?

**Portrait Bust of
Julius Caesar**



Lesson 2

Student Handout 2.2—Cameos

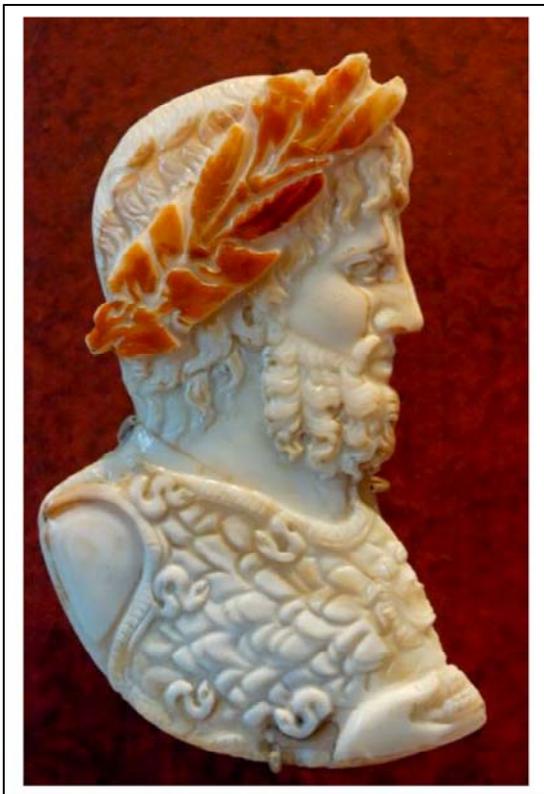
Crafting cameos was a truly Roman innovation. A cameo is a relief carving in which details stand out from a background. Cameos were carved out of sardonyx, a form of quartz, with alternating layers of white and color.

Making cameos involved the combining of two different colors of glass to form layers, with the light overlay color being cut down so that the dark background color would come through. The preferred colors for a cameo were an opaque white layer over a dark translucent blue background.

The emperor Augustus used cameos as a propaganda tool to make his imperial image known throughout the empire. Cameos with the emperor's image reminded everyone of what he looked like and the importance of his power and authority.

Questions for Discussion

- 1) What is a cameo?
- 2) How were cameos made?
- 3) What could Romans learn about an emperor by looking at a cameo?



**Sardonyx cameo showing Jupiter's head crowned with laurel and ivy.
Louvre, Paris**

Lesson 2

Student Handout 2.3—Coinage

Emperors, beginning with Augustus (r. 31 BCE-14 CE), had bronze, silver, and gold coins minted with their own portraits. These coins displayed the names and faces of the emperor on one side. The reverse side of the coin might show a favorite god or goddess, family member, important building, battle won, or advertisement of an imperial virtue.

Stories of the origins of Rome were also made on coins and used throughout the empire. These images displayed the historical roots of the Romans. The stories of Romulus and Remus might be mythological, but ancient Romans believed that the founding of their city was a real historical event.

Like statues and cameos, coins were used as propaganda tools by emperors. Imperial coins, by their very nature, were quickly and widely used, reaching countless citizens. The emperor's image and power could be seen and recognized by people all across the empire.

Questions for Discussion

- 1) What materials did Romans use to make coins?
- 2) What types of images would appear on Roman coins?
- 3) Why do you think that coins were a quick and easy method of propaganda?



Left side: Emperor Augustus
Right side: The god Apollo holding a lyre
Image courtesy of <http://www.cngcoins.com>

Lesson 2

Student Handout 2.4—Glassware

Glassware refers to any item made of glass such as tableware, perfume containers, funerary urns, transport vessels, or *tesserae* (pieces of glass, for mosaics). Many glass cups commemorating specific chariot races, gladiatorial contests, and individual athletes have been found. The popularity of glass was so great for bowls and cups that it replaced the *terracotta*, or clay, vessels that had been previously used.

The method for casting or molding glass was originally developed in the second millennium BCE by Egyptians and Mesopotamians. Early glassware was cast with a labor-intensive process that was costly and slow. In the first century BCE, the Romans discovered it was possible to blow bubbles into glass which could then be formed into a variety of useful vessels. Soon glass was being blown into molds allowing for the mass production of glassware.

Rome became the center of a new glass industry. Glassmakers came from all over the empire to set up glass-blowing workshops. Eventually, Roman glassware was exported all over the Mediterranean. Other peoples acquired these products through trade along the sea routes and [silk roads](#).

Questions for Discussion

- 1) What items did Romans make out of glass?
- 2) What civilizations were the first to create glassware?
- 3) Where was Roman glass exported?



Examples of Roman glassware

Lesson 2

Student Handout 2.5—Mosaics

The Romans liked to decorate their homes and public buildings with mosaics. A mosaic is a picture or design made of small pieces of colored stone, glass, tile, or brick called *tesserae*. The pieces were arranged into scenes or patterns and then fixed in cement or plaster.

The Romans mass-produced mosaics, often in black and white with designs, for the floors of homes and bath complexes. Early mosaics had simple designs, usually geometric, and used only two shades of pebbles, dark and light. The main design of a pictorial mosaic, or *emblema*, would be made with small *tesserae* and would look like a painting. Mosaics were used to decorate walls, vaults, fountains, and outdoor grottoes. Roman architects created mosaic floors for public buildings and the courtyards of grand country villas. Many of them featured mythological scenes or details of plants and animals surrounded by patterned borders.

One of the most famous examples of a mosaic from antiquity is the *Alexander the Great* mosaic from a wall of the House of the Faun, a private home in Pompeii. This mosaic is a reproduction of a painting in which Alexander the Great is riding his beloved horse, Bucephalus, while fighting the Persian ruler Darius III at the Battle of Issus in 333 BCE.

Questions for Discussion

- 1) What is a mosaic?
- 2) Where did Romans put mosaics?
- 3) Why do you think a Roman citizen would have wanted a mosaic of the Macedonian leader, Alexander the Great?



**Mosaic showing Alexander at the Battle of Issus, 333 BCE
Excavated from the House of the Faun in Pompeii.**

Lesson 2

Student Handout 2.6—Mummy Paintings

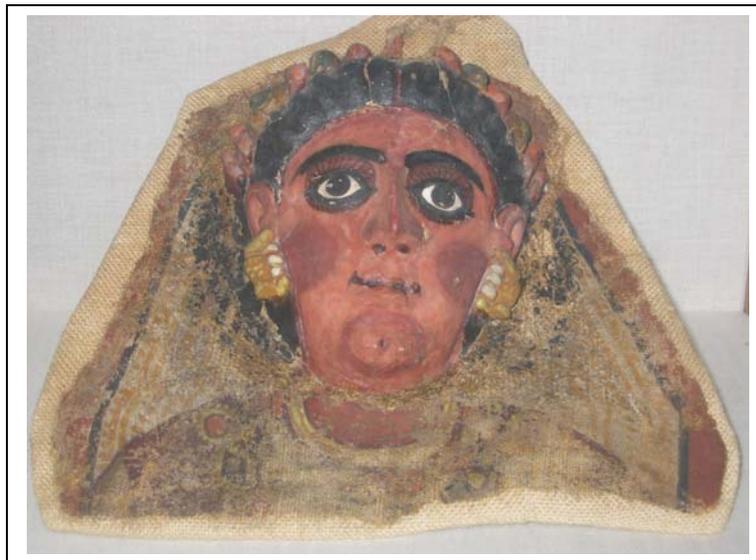
The Romans had a great tradition of panel painting, using different pieces of wood that formed into panels. Much of what is left of panel painting survives in painted Roman mummy portraits from Egypt. Originally, panel paintings were applied on wood, an organic material that decomposes and is destroyed rapidly in wet environments. However, because of the dry Egyptian climate, some panel painting in the form of Roman mummies survives.

Egypt came under Roman rule in 31 BCE. The Romans ruled Egypt through a governor appointed by the emperor. The discovery of painted mummies represents the fusion of two art traditions: Egyptian mummification and Roman realistic portraits.

The Romans painted a wooden board with the head of the deceased using color pigments mixed with beeswax. The board was placed on the mummy and wrapped in the linen cloth around the body. Egyptian mummies used Egyptian-style masks to represent the face. The Romans, however, replaced this with individualized portraits that appeared to show the person at the time of her or his death. By comparing the mummy's facial type and the hairdo with other dated works of art, historians can figure out the time period when the person lived.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is panel painting?
2. What two cultures influenced mummy panel painting?
3. How and what did Romans paint on mummies?



Roman mummy painting
The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago
Photo by Linda Wohlman

Lesson 2

Student Handout 2.7—The Colosseum

The Colosseum is one of Rome's great contributions to the history of architecture. Under the rule of the emperor Vespasian, the Colosseum was completed in 96 CE. It became the first permanent amphitheater used for entertainment. It was here that the Roman public watched the bloodiest spectator sports ever known. They could go to the Colosseum to watch such popular shows as gladiatorial combats, animal fights, mock naval battles, and the execution of enemies of the empire.

The Colosseum is a typical amphitheater: a circular arena with a central stage surrounded by rows of seats. It is 160 feet high, 617 feet across, and 1,729 feet wide, or about a third of a mile around the outside. It could hold up to 50,000 spectators and has 76 exits. Arches, vaults, and concrete were used to build the Colosseum. Most of the interior is made of concrete, while its exterior was made of limestone.

Inspired by Greek styles in architecture, Roman architects decorated the exterior with columns of the Doric style on the ground floor, Ionic style on the second, and Corinthian style on the third. Beneath the ground lay a huge system of passages. Different chambers housed the animals and people while awaiting their performances. The arena could even be flooded for naval battles.

Questions for Discussion

- 1) What forms of entertainment could Romans watch at the Colosseum?
- 2) What building materials were used to create the Colosseum?
- 3) What Greek styles of columns were used in making the Colosseum?



Roman Colosseum

Photos by R. Dunn

Lesson 2

Student Handout 2.8—The Pantheon

The most famous temple of the Romans was the Pantheon. It was built during the reign of the emperor Hadrian. It replaced an earlier temple built during the reign of Augustus, which fire destroyed in 80 CE, and another temple built under Domitian, which burned in 110 CE. The Pantheon was dedicated to the worship of all the deities, especially those connected with the stars and planets. The name Pantheon comes from the Greek *pan*, meaning every, and *theos*, meaning god.

The Pantheon consists of two main parts. The first part is the entryway to the temple, which is a raised *portico*, or porch, with Corinthian columns. The second part of the temple is a circular room covered entirely by a single dome. Concrete and brick were used for the structure of the dome. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of engineering of the Pantheon was the construction of its *occulus*. This is a 27-foot wide circular opening in the top of the dome that lets in light.

The Pantheon's dome represented heaven and its *occulus* symbolized the sun. Sunlight constantly shines through the dome during the day and the stars are visible at night. Thus the heavenly presence, both day and night, is constant in this temple of all the gods.

Questions for Discussion

- 1) What was the Pantheon and what does the word Pantheon mean?
- 2) What are the two main parts of the Pantheon?
- 3) What did the dome and the *occulus* symbolize?



The Pantheon, Rome

Photo by R. Dunn



The Pantheon, Interior

Source: World Images Kiosk
San Jose State University
<http://worldimages.sjsu.edu>
©Cynthia rostankowski

Lesson 2

Student Handout 2.9—Public Baths

Public baths were important meeting places for the Romans. More than just a place to get clean, the baths provided a form of recreation where people could socialize and relax with their friends. Baths were open to members of all social classes, as long as they could pay the small entrance fee.

A bath was a large public complex that included warm and cold pools and steam rooms. Some baths had great halls with many rooms that could hold thousands of bathers at once. A gym, dressing rooms, athletic fields, and lounging rooms could all be a part of the building. The interiors of baths had towering wall spaces and beautiful mosaic floors.

Typically, a bath had several different rooms, each with a different function. Bathers would start in the warm room called a *tepidarium*, where they stayed until they started to sweat. Then they went to the *caldarium*, a hot room where they had a hot bath. The *laconica*, or room with sweating baths, was like a sauna. Finally, they would move on to the *frigidarium* for a cold bath. Instead of using soap, the Romans used oil to get clean and a metal scraper called a *strigil* to scrape off dirt. Bathers might make their final trip at the baths to the *unctorium*, where they would be massaged with oil.

Questions for Discussion

- 1) Why did Romans go to the baths?
- 2) What did a bath complex include?
- 3) What did Romans do in each of the different rooms of a bath?



Archaeological site of a Roman bath in the city of Bath, England

Lesson 2***Student Handout 2.10—Notes on Roman Art***

Draw a picture that symbolizes what this art form looks like	Answers to questions for discussion	Two other important details about this topic
Realistic Portraits		
Cameos		
Coinage		

Glassware		
Mosaics		
Mummy Paintings		

Lesson 2***Student Handout 2.11—Notes on Roman Architecture***

Draw a picture that symbolizes what this architectural form looks like	Answers to questions for discussion	Two more important details about this topic
The Colosseum		
The Pantheon		

Public Baths		
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Lesson 3

Classical Connections: from Roman Art and Architecture to Today

Preparation

Download the PowerPoint ([Classical Connections: From Roman Art and Architecture to Today](#)) associated with this teaching unit and show it to students. Make a copy for each student of Student Handout 3.1 (Extension Menu for Roman Art and Architecture.) Have copies of Student Handouts 1.1 (An Overview of Roman Art) and Student Handouts 2.1 - 2.9 available as a reference for students to complete their unit assessment. For the optional assessment or extra credit activity, please make copies of Student Handout 3.2 (Virtual Art Museum Visit).

Introduction

In this lesson, students will synthesize their knowledge of Roman art and architecture learned in the two previous lessons to complete an original unit assessment activity of their choice.

Activities

Show the PowerPoint to students. This presentation reviews and builds upon the topics covered in the unit. Emphasize that the classical contribution of the Romans and Greeks has had a lasting impact on art and architecture. Can students identify elements in modern art and architecture that have been influenced by the classical Greek and Roman styles?

Now that students have become “experts” on Roman art and architecture, have them complete an original assessment activity from the extension menu on Student Handout 3.1. All of these activities are designed to help students synthesize the main ideas of the unit and evaluate the contributions of Greek and Roman art to the modern world. Depending on teacher preference, students may work in pairs, small groups of three, or as individuals to complete one or more of the suggested extension menu activities. Teachers may choose to eliminate or expand upon the choices of items on the extension menu based on the level of their students and time available.

For teachers who would like a much shorter assessment or an option for extra credit for students, Student Handout 3.2 (Virtual Art Museum Visit) may be used. This option requires students to use the Internet, find an original work of Roman art from an established art museum, and analyze it using the knowledge gained in this unit.

Lesson 3

Student Handout 3.1—Extension Activity Menu for Roman Art and Architecture

Create a booklet, brochure, poster, or PowerPoint presentation on the topic of Roman art.

Your project should include three summaries, based on your choice of three of the following topics: portraits, coinage, cameos, mosaics, mummy paintings, and glassware. Each summary should be at least five complete sentences. You should have a good color visual related to each of these three topics. You should also have an additional paragraph answering the following question: How has classical art contributed to styles in art today? Your booklet, brochure, poster, or PowerPoint should have a title with a good color visual and your name(s).

Create a booklet, brochure, poster, or PowerPoint presentation on the topic of Roman architecture.

Your project should have three different summaries using details from the readings on each of the following topics: Roman baths, the Colosseum, and the Pantheon. Each summary should be at least five complete sentences. You should have a good color visual related to each of these three topics. You should also have an additional paragraph answering the following question: How have styles of classical architecture contributed to architecture today? Your booklet, brochure, poster, or PowerPoint should have a title with a good color visual and your name(s).

Game Board Project

Create a game board about Roman art and architecture. Your game board needs to be well-designed and in color. It needs to have at least five pictures that are examples of Roman art and architecture. Your game board needs an original title. You should have at least twenty playing cards with questions and answers using details about Roman art and architecture learned about in class. On the reverse side of your game board, write a paragraph which answers the following question: What were the major contributions of Roman art and architecture?

Mosaic Art Project

Create an original mosaic on a theme in ancient Rome. For this project, you will design an original mosaic out of construction paper based on an actual mosaic from ancient Rome or another theme related to ancient Rome. Look at pictures of different Roman mosaics from books and the Internet to help you. Attach to your mosaic three paragraphs which answer the following questions about mosaics: What is the subject or theme of your mosaic and how does it relate to Rome? How does looking at ancient Roman mosaics help us understand the daily lives of the ancient Romans? How has the Roman classical style in art contributed to art today?

Digital Photography Project

This project requires the use of your own digital camera and the ability to download your pictures and put them into a PowerPoint or print them out and cut and paste them onto a poster. You might also need the permission and/or help of your parents to take pictures in your neighborhood or around the city for this project. You will need to identify and take pictures of at least five of the following forms of art or structures: an arch, a vault, a dome, a mosaic, a public bath, classical style columns, a realistic portrait, glassware, coinage, or cameos. You need to

display your pictures in either a PowerPoint presentation or poster. Identify each picture and indicate where it was taken. Write an explanation of how each of these modern elements of art and architecture that you recorded was influenced by styles of the classical art of the Greeks and Romans.



**Supreme Court Building
Washington, D.C.**

Source: World Images Kiosk,
San Jose State University
<http://worldimages.sjsu.edu>,
©Kathleen Cohen

Lesson 3

Student Handout 3.2—Virtual Museum Visit

Directions

Using the Internet, choose one of the museum websites below. Each of these museums has an extensive collection of Roman art and artifacts. Navigate the museum you are “visiting” to find where you can view the Roman art collections. Choose one Roman art piece from the time period we have been studying in this unit and complete the art history analysis questions. Make sure that you print out the web page that has the picture and description of the artwork and attach it to your answers to the questions.

Museum Sites with Roman Art Collections

- The Getty, Los Angeles
<http://www.getty.edu>

- Naples National Archaeological Museum, Naples
<http://www.marketplace.it/museo.nazionale>

- British Museum, London
<http://www.getty.edu/museum/>

- The Metropolitan Museum, New York
- <http://www.metmuseum.org/>

- Pergamonmuseum, Berlin
<http://www.smb.spk-berlin.de/>

- The Louvre, Paris
<http://www.louvre.fr/>

Art History Analysis Questions

1. What is the title and name of the artwork you have chosen to analyze? Who is the artist (if available)?

2. What type of art form is it (painting, coinage, mosaic, etc.)?

3. What materials were used in creating this artwork (paint, tiles, plaster, concrete, etc.)?

4. Think like a Roman: Do you think this art was made to be seen by the public or by a private citizen of Rome? Explain.

5. Think like an art historian: What do you think the purpose of making this art was (i.e., for beauty, decoration, to honor someone, propaganda, etc.)?
6. Think like a historian: What type of clues does this art give us about how ancient Romans lived?
7. Think like a historian: Think about what you learned in this unit about how the styles of different societies have influenced Roman art. How has the art of other cultures affected the style of this Roman art piece (i.e., Greece, Egypt, etc.)?

This unit and the Three Essential Questions

	<p>Research some examples of Roman art or architecture that depict the natural environment, that is, plants and animals (other than humans). Discuss why the artist or architect might have used those forms.</p>
	<p>Scholars have sometimes said that the art and architecture of ancient empires tell us much more about the lives of powerful political and cultural elites than ordinary men and women. Do you think this is true? If so, why do you think this is the case?</p>
	<p>Why do you think classical styles of architecture have been used so much in public buildings in western countries?</p>

This unit and the Seven Key Themes

This unit emphasizes:

Key Theme 2: Economic Networks and Exchange

Key Theme 5: Expressing Identity

Key Theme 6: Science, Technology, and the Environment

This unit and the Standards in Historical Thinking

Historical Thinking Standard 1: Chronological Thinking

The student is able to (F) reconstruct patterns of historical succession and duration in which historical developments have unfolded, and apply them to explain historical continuity and change.

Historical Thinking Standard 2: Historical Comprehension

The student is able to (H) utilize visual, mathematical, and quantitative data presented in charts, tables, pie and bar graphs, flow charts, Venn diagrams, and other graphic organizers to clarify, illustrate, or elaborate upon information presented in the historical narrative.

Historical Thinking Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation

The student is able to (A) compare and contrast differing sets of ideas, values, personalities, behaviors, and institutions by identifying likenesses and differences.

Historical Thinking Standard 4: Historical Research Capabilities

The student is able to (B) obtain historical data from a variety of sources, including: library and museum collections, historic sites, historical photos, journals, diaries, eyewitness accounts, newspapers, and the like; documentary films, oral testimony from living witnesses, censuses, tax records, city directories, statistical compilations, and economic indicators.

Historical Thinking Standard 5: Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-Making

The student is able to (C) identify relevant historical antecedents and differentiate from those that are inappropriate and irrelevant to contemporary issues.

Resources***Resources for teachers***

Beard, Mary and John Henderson. *Classical Art from Greece to Rome*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001. This is a dense scholarly overview of Greek and Roman art, but it also contains many useful pictures, maps, and a wonderful timeline of important dates in Greek and Roman art.

Gombrich, E. H. *The Story of Art*. Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1984. An introductory survey of art and artists from ancient times to the twentieth century. All the major periods and styles of art and architecture are covered.

Ramage, Nancy and Andrew Ramage. *Roman Art: Romulus to Constantine*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1996. An excellent reference book on Roman art and architecture. This handbook organizes art pieces chronologically and gives extensive pictures and background information on each piece.

“Roman Copies of Greek Statues.” In *Timeline of Art History*. Department of Greek and Roman Art. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000.
http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/rogr/hd_rogr.htm. This article explains the significance of Rome in preserving Greek art.

Silver, Larry. *Art in History*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993. An overview of all periods in art history. The section on “Ancient Ancestors” includes chapters surveying art in Egypt, Assyria, Greece, the Hellenistic world, and Rome.

Thompson, Nancy. *Roman Art: A Resource for Educators*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2007. An excellent resource for educators interested in teaching lessons on Roman art. This teaching unit gives detailed background information on Roman art pieces and includes reproducible handouts and activities for students.

Trentinella, Rosemarie. "Roman Cameo Glass." In *Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000.
http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/rcam/hd_rcam.htm. This thematic essay from the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art gives good information about Roman cameos.

Trentinella, Rosemarie. "Roman Portrait Sculpture." In *Timeline of Art History*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000.
http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/ropo/hd_ropo.htm. This thematic essay from the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art gives good information about Roman portraits.

Wheeler, Sir Mortimer. *Roman Art and Architecture*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1991. An introduction and analysis of Roman art and architecture. The analysis can be a bit esoteric at times, but the background information is useful. The book is arranged thematically by art style and includes photos, illustrations, and descriptions.

Resources for students

Bergin, Mark and Fiona MacDonald. *The Roman Colosseum*. New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 1998. A wonderful book with readable text and great pictures on the Colosseum.

Chrisp, Peter. *History in Art: Ancient Rome*. Chicago: Raintree, 2005. A wonderful survey of Roman art for kids. This book also gives many interesting facts about some of the most famous pieces of Roman artwork by pointing to various parts of the artwork, with commentary.

Corbishley, Mike. *What Do We Know about the Romans?* Chicago: Peter Bedrick Books, 1991. A kid-friendly book that begins each section with a main question and answers it. Sections on Roman artists and inventors are useful in learning about art.

Greenway, Shirley. *Art: An A-Z Guide*. New York: Franklin Watts, 2000. A dictionary of art terms, styles, and techniques for students. An excellent reference for both students and educators. Each page defines the term in easy-to-read language and includes visual examples.

Hinds, Kathryn. *The Ancient Romans*. New York: Benchmark Books, 1997. An excellent survey of all topics related to ancient Rome. The chapter on "Practicality and Pleasure" contains useful information on public buildings and art in Rome.

Hodge, Susie. *Ancient Roman Art*. Chicago: Heinemann Library, 1998. This book is one in a series examining the art of ancient complex societies. It provides an introduction and overview of major topics about Roman art with clear, easy-to-read explanations and pictures for students.

James, Simon. *Eyewitness Ancient Rome*. London: Dorling Kindersley, 2004. Eyewitness has a wonderful series on all the ancient complex societies. The book has a section on a trip to the baths and crafts-working and technology which are useful in learning about arts and architecture.

Macaulay, David. *Building Big*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2000. This book gives an overview of the most famous examples of bridges, tunnels, dams, domes, and skyscrapers in history. It includes excellent background information and pictures of the Pantheon.

Roman Art from the Louvre: Resource for Educators. New York: American Federation of Arts, 2008. This is a teaching unit for educators with background information, activities, and reproducible handouts for students. It has excellent ideas for discussion starters and art activities for students.

Correlations to National and State Standards

National Standards for World History

Era 3: Classical Traditions, Major Religions, and Giant Empires, 1000 BCE – 300 CE. 3A: Evaluate the major legal, artistic, architectural, technological, and literary achievements of the Romans and the influence of Hellenistic cultural traditions on Roman Europe.

California: History-Social Science Content Standards

Grade Six, 6.7.8: Discuss the legacies of Roman art and architecture, technology and science, literature, language, and law.

New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for Social Studies

6.3.8.B. Early human societies to 500 CE. 4: Describe the significant contributions of ancient Greece to Western Civilization, including: Characteristics of Classic Greek art and architecture and how they are reflected in modern art and architecture; 8: Analyze how shifts in the political framework of Roman society impacted the expansion of the empire and how this expansion transformed Roman society, economy, and culture.

New York: Social Studies Resource Guide with Core Curriculum

Unit One. C. Classical Civilizations. 3. Roman republic. B. Contributions: Law (Twelve Tables), architecture, literature, roads, bridges.

Virginia History and Social Science Standards of Learning

WHI. 6. The student will demonstrate knowledge of ancient Rome from about 700 BC to AD 500 in terms of its impact on Western Civilization by j) listing contributions in art and architecture, technology and science, medicine, literature and history, language, religious institutions, and law.

Conceptual links to other teaching units

	<p>Big Era Four Panorama Teaching Unit Expanding Networks of Exchange and Encounter, 1200 BCE – 500 CE During this Big Era, the development of long-distance communications webs created primarily for trade also stimulated more sustained cultural contacts among societies distant from one another. These contacts were an important source of change within societies.</p>
	<p>Big Era Four Landscape Teaching Unit 4.5 Giant Empires of Afroeurasia, 300 BCE - 200 CE The Roman empire was one of several immense states that sprawled across Afroeurasia during these centuries. Unification of extensive territories meant that some artistic ideas and methods spread widely. These empires also had cultural influences on one another, including artistic influences.</p>
	<p>Big Era Four Closeup Teaching Unit 4.5.1 Roman Art and Architecture The distinctive styles of Roman art and architecture are the result of cultural cross-fertilization throughout the Mediterranean Sea basin, which Rome unified by conquest. Greek art forms and techniques had the greatest influence in the empire.</p>