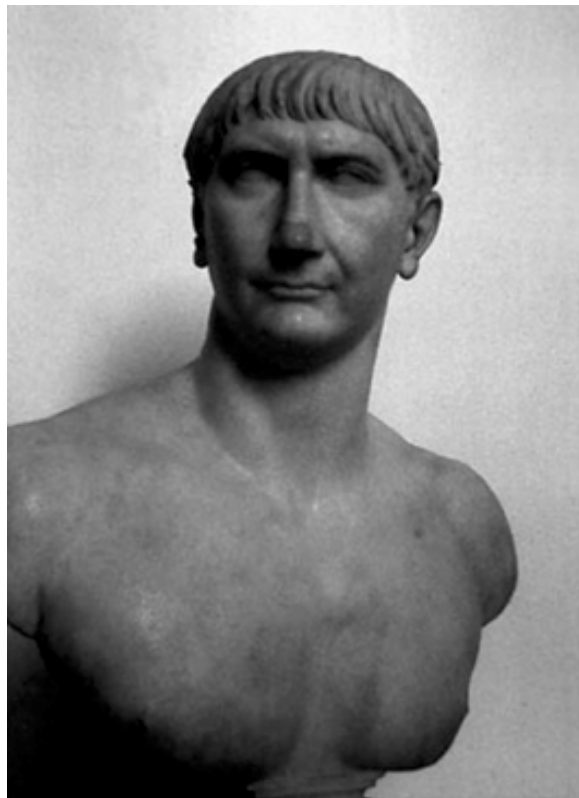


**TRAJAN'S ROME:
THE MAN, THE CITY,
THE EMPIRE**



**GETTY EDUCATION INSTITUTE FOR THE ARTS
AND
NATIONAL CENTER FOR HISTORY IN THE SCHOOLS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES**

NATIONAL CENTER FOR HISTORY IN THE SCHOOLS
University of California, Los Angeles



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TRAJAN'S ROME: THE MAN, THE CITY, THE EMPIRE

A Unit of Study for Grades 6–9

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TRAJAN’S ROME: THE MAN, THE CITY, THE EMPIRE

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This primary source-based teaching unit is the product of a spirited collaboration between two institutions and three kinds of history educators. Launched as a joint venture between the Getty Education Institute for the Arts and the National Center for History in the Schools (NCHS) at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), it brought together three middle and high school history teachers in the Los Angeles area, three academic historians teaching at local universities, and an art educator at the Getty. It is hoped that teachers reading and using this teaching unit will see the benefits of connecting the communities of history and art educators.

The three precollegiate classroom teachers were: Stephen S. Anderson, Schurr High School, Montebello, and Teacher Leadership Team, UCLA History-Geography Project; Claudia Flanders, Lincoln Middle School, Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District, and Teacher Leadership Team, UCLA History-Geography Project; and David Landers, Jones Junior High School, Baldwin Park Unified School District, and Senior Fellow, UCLA History-Geography Project. All three collaborated on every part of *Trajan's Rome: The Man, the City, the Empire*, but each took the lead role for particular lessons. Anderson had special responsibility for Lessons 1 and 4, Flanders for Lessons 5 and 6, and Landers for Lessons 2 and 3.

Playing a key role in conceptualizing the teaching unit and providing scholarly expertise were D. Brendan Nagel, Professor of Roman History at the University of Southern California, and Amanda Podany, Associate Professor of History at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and Director of the California History-Social Science Project from 1993–97. Gary B. Nash, Professor of History at UCLA, served as project director and co-editor of the unit. Ronald Mellor, Professor of History at UCLA, kindly provided several translations of Roman documents. Marian McKenna Olivas was the layout editor. At the Getty, Madeleine Coulombe served as illustration researcher. Gregory Dobie copyedited the manuscript.

The Getty funded the creation of this unit—one that happily absorbed the time, energy, and teaching skills of the participating authors during the summer and fall of 1997. Jeffrey Patchen at the Getty supported our proposal and brought it to Candace Borland, the manager of the Getty's arts education Web site, ArtsEdNet, who had the vision to fund the project. Kathy Talley-Jones, project manager for the Getty, served as co-editor, provided art education expertise, and conceptualized the unit for the Web site.

Many of the images in this teaching unit are reproduced from the photographic collection of Professor Albert Hoxie, UCLA, whose generosity is warmly acknowledged.

INTRODUCTION

APPROACH AND RATIONALE

The National Center for History in the Schools (NCHS) and the Getty Education Institute for the Arts (GEIA) have developed the following collection of lessons for teaching about the Roman Empire. The unit is designed to give teachers and students an opportunity to delve into the deeper meanings of selected landmark events and explore their wider context in the great historical narrative.

This unit integrates the study of art and history and promotes the development of critical thinking skills. The lessons are organized around primary documents, as are all of the units the NCHS has developed over the last eight years. This unit exploits not only text-based primary sources, however, but also other rich sources that are presented visually rather than verbally: sculpture, architecture, urban designs, and ancient artifacts. The study of primary texts and images of objects from the past greatly enlivens and enriches investigation of the ancient world. It also will help propel reading-resistant students into text-based materials. The unit provides an example of how the arts and history can complement one another.

For art educators, this teaching unit presents a way of cultivating students' creative, aesthetic, critical, and art historical sensibilities by situating art in a broad context of social, cultural, and political meaning. The unit reflects a comprehensive approach to art education, one mirrored in numerous state frameworks and national art standards. Students will learn how to "read" paintings, buildings, symbols, and photographs and to probe the potential and limits of images and artifacts to explain the past. This unit, then, is avowedly interdisciplinary.

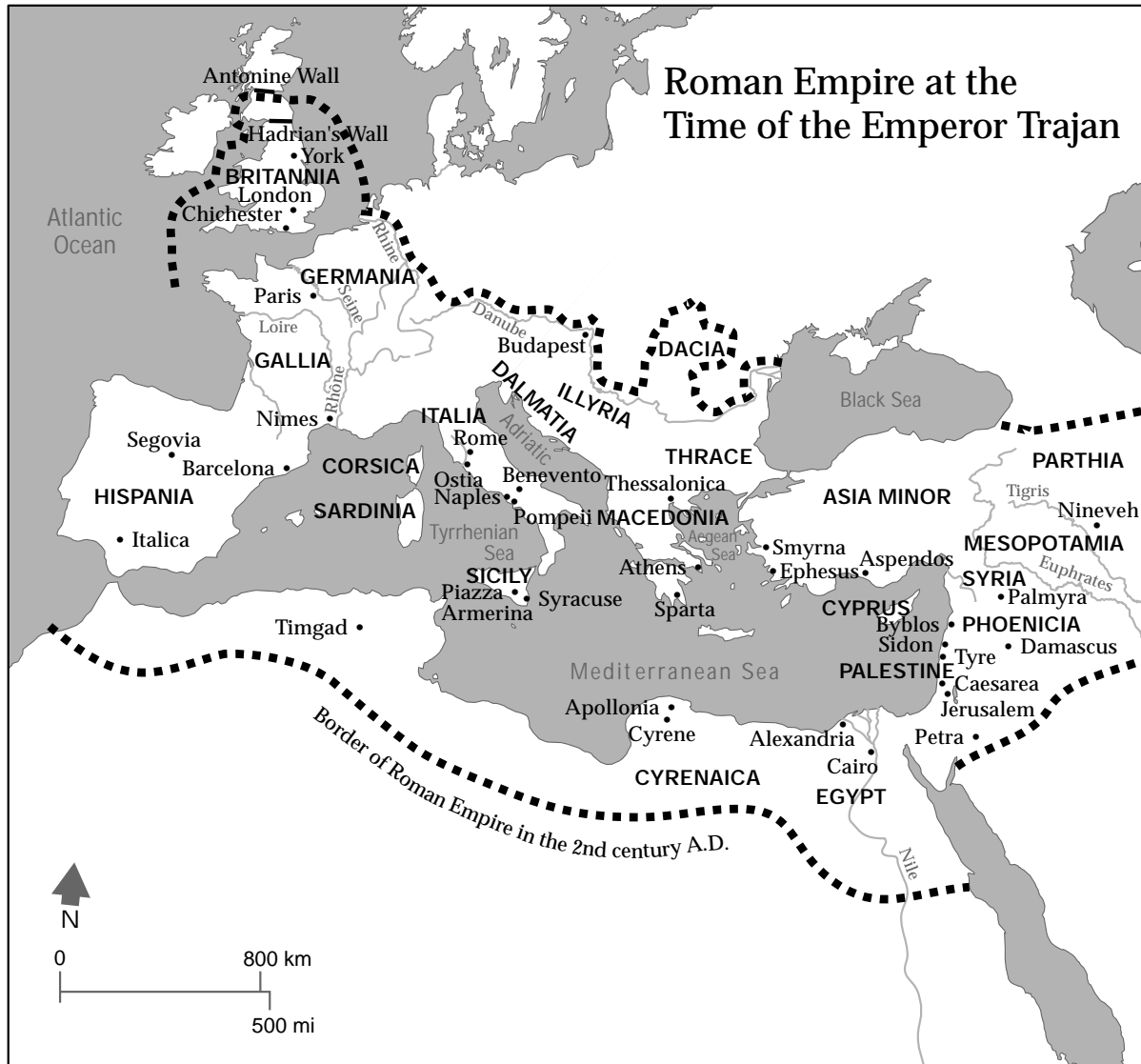
The emphasis on primary documents, both textual and visual, aims at removing the distance that students feel from historical events and connecting them more intimately with the past. We hope to create for your students a sense of "being there," an ability to see history through the eyes of the people they are studying. This will help your students develop historical empathy, to realize that history is not an impersonal process divorced from real people like themselves. At the same time, by analyzing primary sources, students will practice the historian's craft, discovering for themselves how to analyze evidence, establish a valid interpretation, and construct a coherent narrative in which all the relevant factors play a part.

CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

For centuries after the end of the Roman Empire, people in Western Europe looked back on the decades from A.D. 98 to 180, the time of the Emperor Trajan and the other so-called Good Emperors, as the height of human civilization. It was a time when an empire thousands of miles across was held together by a sophisticated system of government and ruled under a

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common set of laws, when people could travel freely and ideas could spread as a result of the common languages that were spoken (Latin in the west and Greek in the east). Contrary to popular misconception, most peoples subject to Roman rule during the second century A.D. were not anxious for freedom, but enjoyed the benefits and privileges that came to Roman subjects.



Intellectuals of the Middle Ages, of the Renaissance, and even of early modern times did not imagine that it would be possible to improve on the culture, art, lifestyle, extent of trade, or prosperity of the era of the Good Emperors. This seems strange to us now, with our obsession with the present and with technology and the possibilities of the future; in the minds of many

people alive now, the study of ancient Rome seems irrelevant to modern life. But the successors to the Romans had a point. Roman civilization *was* remarkable, and the descriptions of life there seem strangely familiar. Building programs brought constant construction to the city center; the government provided food for the poorest in the society; goods were traded over hundreds of miles on well-built roads; travelers were protected against armed attack; people followed the careers of celebrities and sports teams with interest; cities were populated by individuals of many races speaking many different languages and wearing different national dress. Much like today, Romans also worried about crime and were afraid to walk the streets at night; they fretted over the social pressure to wear expensive clothes, even when they couldn't afford them; they complained about corrupt politicians; and they longed for the morals and family values of an earlier time.

On the other hand, many aspects of ancient life were very different from modern life. The Romans had, of course, none of the technology that so dominates the present: no telephones, high-speed transportation, or electronic entertainment. They did not work for hourly wages or salaries, nor did they schedule their days so precisely. Whereas Americans tend to spend their leisure time at home watching television with their families, the Roman ideal was to socialize, whether at the house of a friend, at the baths, or at the Forum, or to attend the huge spectacles held at the amphitheater and the circus. Conversely, many Americans tend to join with others at weekly religious services, the Romans did not congregate to practice their state religion. There were no regular worship services for the population at large. The religion was polytheistic and undogmatic; that is, it had no holy book outlining the main tenets of the religion and changed to accommodate the political climate.

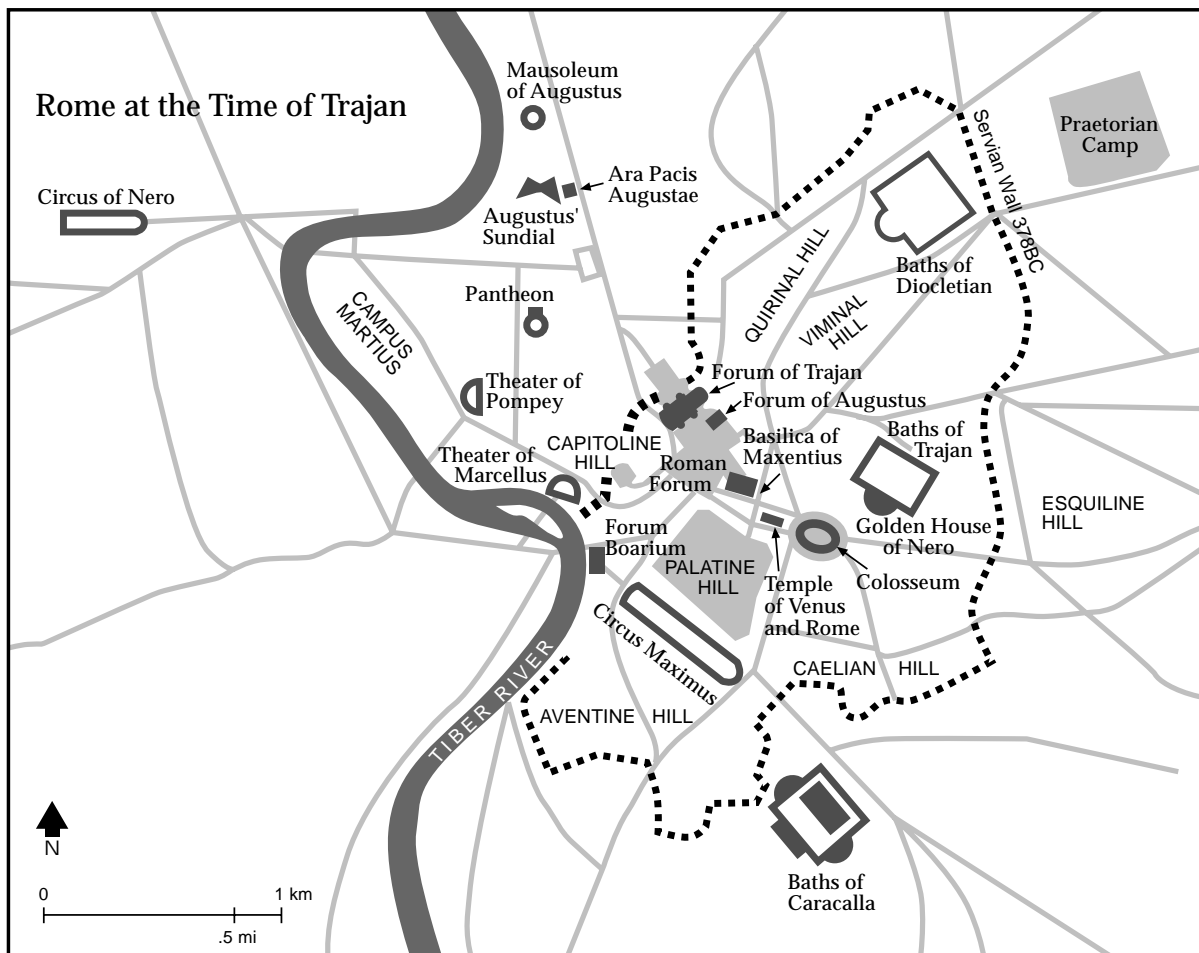
Using the arts is particularly fitting in a study of Trajan's Rome, for it was during this time that Roman art came into its own. For many centuries Greek influences had dominated the art of Rome. During Trajan's era the Romans perfected their active and energetic style. No longer were idealized humans and gods the only subjects of sculpture, painting, and mosaics; the Romans showed real people fighting or working or mourning in actual settings and included as much detail as they could capture.

In this unit students will look at ancient Rome not as a dusty relic but as a thriving, bustling capital, as it was during the reign of the Emperor Trajan. Through the activities described here, and through reading the words of Roman writers and analyzing Roman art and architecture, the students will come to an understanding of what it might have been like to live in the time of Trajan. This unit emphasizes the importance of having students do their own investigation into primary sources, that is, documents, artifacts, and architecture produced during the era, and drawing conclusions on the basis of their investigations. In so doing, they will be following the same steps taken by historians and archaeologists as they try to reconstruct the past. Students should realize that secondary sources about Rome, such as history books and textbooks, result from a vast amount of research and detective work; the heart of the historian's work lies in

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piecing together and analyzing fragments of evidence that have happened to survive until today. These fragments vary between the very formal and the informal, between documents written for the centuries and quick notes never intended to last, between great architectural monuments and prosaic latrines. They include laws, formal histories written by such men as Suetonius and Tacitus, letters between individuals or between the emperor and his governors, grave inscriptions and their accompanying relief statues, graffiti, wall paintings, floor mosaics, ceremonial arches, plays, and satires. The students will have a chance to read and analyze all these types of primary sources over the course of this unit.

The unit is divided into six lessons. **Lesson I** begins by looking at Trajan himself and at the extent of the empire during his reign. Trajan was born into a family living in Spain. He was well respected during his lifetime and continued to be much admired after his death. The Forum he built in Rome was an architectural masterpiece, including a vast public space surrounded by colonnades, a basilica, a library, and the monument for which he is best known, Trajan's Column. Around the column, which still stands, a spiraling relief sculpture tells the story in pictures of Trajan's greatest achievements, especially in his wars against the Dacians. Since few Romans were literate, images like this (and like those found on ceremonial arches and coins) served to inform the citizens of their emperor's victories.

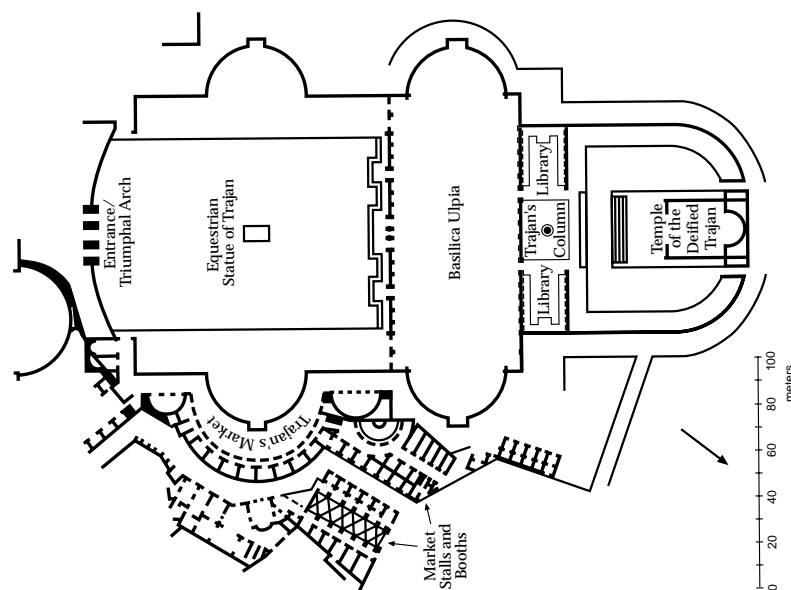


Although the term *Rome* is often used both for the city and the empire, the two were of course not synonymous. The vast majority of people living in the Roman Empire were not from Rome, nor had they ever visited the city. Nevertheless, in this unit the city of Rome will be looked at as a microcosm of the empire, with its very heterogeneous population, splendid architecture, and lively politics.

Lesson II explores the population of Rome: the social classes, families, slaves and freedmen, and vast numbers of foreigners. A Roman family was somewhat different from a modern family. The father of the household held much more power over the rest of the family than is true today, and children had few rights. The institution of slavery in Rome also defies some preconceptions: for example, freed slaves in the employ of the emperor could be very powerful, and many freedmen became wealthy, as Petronius maliciously lampooned in his *Satyricon*.

Lesson III will look into the building of Trajan's city. The Romans were famous for their feats of architecture and civil engineering. For example, water was sometimes brought from long distances to supply a populous city. Even today, some Roman aqueducts still stand, dominating the landscape in areas of Europe and North Africa. Roman roads were built right across the empire, and the Romans perfected a type of fast-setting strong concrete that allowed the construction of immense edifices such as the Colosseum and the Pantheon in Rome. Other structures were less enduring; wooden residences were often poorly constructed, and frequent fires raged through the densely built parts of town. Juvenal, the Roman satirist, complains of roof tiles that hit pedestrians as they made their way through Rome.

Site Plan of the Forum



Introduction

In **Lesson IV** students will investigate how the city and empire were governed. Roman government featured the institution of the Senate, but by the time of Trajan, its power of the Senate was different from that of the U.S. Senate. In early Roman times, during the Republic, the Senate had the power to pass legislation and to control finances. By the time of Trajan the Senate's power was no longer in its function as a legislative body, but in the individual senators, who gained personal power when appointed by the emperor to governorships and other positions across the empire. One section of the lesson looks at Roman law and how individual laws can provide insights into daily life.

The empire itself became a vast emporium, with goods traded from end to end. Some of these were luxury items, but in **Lesson V** students will learn that much of the trade was in foodstuffs and other staples. A city the size of Rome did not grow its own food but was dependent on trade to supply the needs of the population. Many inhabitants of Rome subsisted on free handouts of bread that were provided to the poorest classes. The amount of bread involved and the logistics of bringing it into Rome and distributing it are surprising.

The poor population was not only provided with free food but also with entertainment, which is the topic of **Lesson VI**. If transported back to Rome, modern-day Americans would find much of Roman entertainment extremely violent; especially the thousands of gladiator contests and animal fights sponsored by Trajan to celebrate his military victories, with their many public deaths of both people and wild animals. In the theater, the Romans seem to have had little patience with Greek tragedy and preferred comedies, often loosely based on Greek originals. Religion also provided public spectacle and entertainment; religious festivals provided more and more holidays in the Roman calendar.

Rome was an exciting place to be in Trajan's time. It was loud and busy, full of exotic goods and spectacular monuments, the rich and the poor, Romans, Greeks, Spaniards, Africans, Gauls, and Syrians. Some of the artwork and the literature that have survived allow a glimpse at what it must have been like to live there and provide an understanding of why people for centuries afterwards wished they could have been alive in Rome in the second century A.D.

The six lessons in this unit, each with various activities, are pitched at Grades 6–9 but can usually be adapted to higher or lower levels. The **Historical Background Information for Teachers** sections provide specific material necessary to teach the various lessons and interpret the primary sources—textual and visual. Teachers may consult these background write-ups for their own use or share them with students at appropriate grade levels.

The **Activities** include a variety of ideas and pedagogical approaches that teachers can elaborate upon or reconfigure. The lesson plans contain **Student Handouts** that are the main ore for students to mine. The **Select Bibliography and Resource List** at the end of this unit provides teachers with additional teaching material.

All of the material in this publication as well as video and virtual reality clips of a reconstructed version of Trajan's Forum are available on the Internet. *Trajan's Rome: The Man, the City, and the Empire* can be accessed through ArtsEdNet (<http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/>), the GEIA's Web site. The Web site complements and expands the print version of the units and includes other lesson ideas connected with the ancient world. Most images from this teaching unit are available in color online and can be downloaded by teachers for classroom use. These have been developed to celebrate the opening of the Getty Center, a new home for the arts in Los Angeles.

UNIT CONTEXT

This teaching unit fits into a course on the ancient world when students learn about the rise of Rome and the Roman Empire. This ordinarily follows a unit on the ancient Greeks and classical Greece. "Trajan's Rome: the Man, the City, the Empire" will bring alive the era of the Good Emperors (A.D. 98–180) when the Roman Empire reached its peak and the city of Rome enjoyed its pinnacle of political and cultural achievement. Although this teaching unit puts the spotlight on Emperor Trajan, teachers can use the unit to help students understand the period before and after his rule.

Trajan's Rome: the Man, the City, the Empire can be taught in several ways. Teachers can use all the lessons or select and adapt lessons or parts of lessons that best support particular course objectives. These offerings are not comprehensive or prescriptive, but rather provide an array of enticing possibilities for in-depth study at different grade levels. However much of the teaching unit is brought to the classroom, students will see that history is not a boring collection of facts and dates or a sweep of historical forces that inevitably determined people's lives. The Emperor Trajan, his city, and his empire will come alive and draw students into how historians reconstruct the past and show its relevance to today's world.

UNIT OBJECTIVES

1. To study the period of the Good Emperors of Roman history in ways that show connections between the political, military, social, and religious dimensions of everyday life.
2. To study historical documents, artifacts, and art in order to appreciate history as a dynamic discipline that studies, interprets, and debates the meaning of humanity's collective past.
3. To learn how and why art and architecture were produced in particular forms and how Roman art and architecture have influenced today's built environment and today's aesthetic sensibilities.

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4. To explore the differences and similarities between life in Ancient Rome and life in the United States today in such areas as governance, urban infrastructure, education, family life, provisioning cities, and entertainment.

CORRELATION TO THE NATIONAL HISTORY STANDARDS

Trajan's Rome: the Man, the City, the Empire provides teaching materials that address the *National Standards for History*, Basic Edition (National Center for History in Schools, UCLA, 1996), World History, Era 3, "Classical Traditions, Major Religions, and Giant Empires, 1000 B.C.–A.D. 300." Lessons specifically address Standard 3A on "The causes and consequences of the unification of the Mediterranean basin under Roman rule." The lessons also support the History Thinking Skills, including Standard 2 ("The student comprehends a variety of historical sources"), Standard 3 ("The student engages in historical analysis and interpretation"), and Standard 4A ("The student conducts historical research by formulating historical questions from encounters with historical documents, . . . art, architecture, and other records from the past").

Statue of Trajan



TRAJAN: THE MAN AND HIS EMPIRE

LESSON I OVERVIEW

COMPLETION TIME: This lesson will take approximately five days (class periods).

OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Analyze primary sources in order to evaluate the responsibilities, successes, and failures of Emperor Trajan.
- ◆ Learn how to interpret the monumental arches and columns erected by Roman emperors.
- ◆ Learn how monuments reveal information about ancient Rome.
- ◆ Discover the geographical extent of Trajan's empire.

ACTIVITIES

◆ Activity 1: Using Written Sources to Evaluate Trajan's Rule

In collaborative groups, students will read and analyze primary source selections concerning Trajan's rule. (This will take approximately one class period.)

◆ Activity 2: Analyzing Trajan's Column to Understand Trajan and His Empire

Students will look closely at photographs of Trajan's Column, including close-ups of scenes carved into the column, to understand the emperor, his people, and his empire. (This will take approximately one class period.)

◆ Activity 3: Analyzing Roman Statements of Power through Monumental Sculpture

Students will examine visuals of the Arch of Trajan and the Arch of Titus to understand the ideology their reliefs portrayed to the populace and to future generations. (This will take approximately one class period.)

◆ Activity 4: Charting the Extent of Trajan's Empire

Students will follow Trajan's travels on maps and use a modern atlas to understand the magnitude and geographical diversity of Trajan's Empire. (This will take approximately one and a half to two class periods.)

KEY WORDS

Alexander	consul	Domitian	legion	praetorship
Armenians	Dacians	Hadrian	Mesopotamia	Rome
Assyria	Danube	India	Nerva	Tigris
Athens	Decebalus	Italia	Parthians	tribune