Description

Warm up (5 min)
As a warm up, the students will complete a Venn diagram that compares the Roman Empire and Han China. This will be a review of content learned earlier in the week and will be useful as a study tool for the quiz that is happening during the next class period. In order to transition into the next topic, the teacher will tell students that they will be revisiting the complex society of the Roman Empire.

Discussion of reading (25 min)
Following the warm up, the students will be asked to take out their homework—a reading entitled, “Bread and Circuses: The Task of Controlling the Masses.” In their groups (which are grouped homogeneously by reading level), students will be assigned two questions from a worksheet to discuss and record on the worksheet. Different questions will be selected for each group based on reading ability. The questions include:

1. Summarize the main ideas from this reading. (low level)
2. List the solutions that Roman emperors came up with to keep people pleased. (low level)
3. Who did these events appeal to and involve for different reasons? (mid level)
4. What are the positive and negative aspects of this type of societal control? (mid level)
5. What parallels do you see between our society and Roman society? (high level)
6. Evaluate the use of the bread and circuses to control the masses. Were they good for society? (high level)

When students have finished discussing their two questions, the class will come back together and groups will share out their responses. Students are to fill in the remaining parts of the worksheet according to the discussion points that other groups raise.

Discussion of the impact today (20 min)
Once the discussion of the reading is completed, the teacher will transition into the next activity by asking students to think about the possible impact of the bread and circuses of the Roman Empire on American society today. In their groups, students will respond to the following questions:

1. Do you think that the bread and circuses of the Roman Empire have an impact on us in America today? Why or why not?
2. What are some examples of public spectacles that are used as a form of distraction in America?
3. Compare today’s professional sports leagues to the circuses and gladiatorial fights of the Roman Empire.

After groups finish their discussions, they will share out their responses with the rest of the class.

In the final moments of class, the teacher will show a short news clip from 1987 about ChicagoFest, as an example of a public spectacle meant to distract the masses.

Students will also respond to a discussion question on their class website (Haiku) as an exit slip. The question asks: In your opinion, do we witness the effects of “Bread and Circuses” in our own culture? Are we purposely distracted from the real issues by mass entertainment?

*Extension (5 min)*
If extra time remains, the teacher will draw connections between what students have previously learned about citizenship as an empire building tool and citizenship and civic duty in America. The teacher will present poll results from the midterm elections and ask students the following questions:

Why do so few Americans take civic action? If citizenship is such an important part of belonging to a nation/empire/republic/etc. then why would people choose not to vote?

**Materials and Resources**

The teacher will need a computer, internet access, a digital projector, and a projector screen. The teacher will also need the discussion worksheet and the unit packet which contains the Bread and Circuses reading.

The students will need their unit packets and a pen to take notes during the reading activity.

**ISBE/Professional Organization Learning Standards**

18.A.4 Analyze the influence of cultural factors including customs, traditions, language, media, art and architecture in developing pluralistic societies.

18.B.4 Analyze various forms of institutions (e.g., educational, military, charitable, governmental).

14.C.4 Describe the meaning of participatory citizenship (e.g., volunteerism, voting) at all levels of government and society in the United States.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

Objectives

1. Examine the use of bread and circuses in the Roman Empire by responding to reading comprehension questions.

2. Connect the use of bread and circuses in the Roman Empire to the current day use of public spectacles in America by discussing with classmates.

3. Evaluate the effectiveness of using bread and circuses to control society, both in the Roman Empire and in America today by discussing with classmates.

Modifications

(a) For students who do not understand

Students who do not understand the material are welcome to ask questions throughout the lesson and will be given the opportunity to work more closely with the teacher during the group-work time, if needed.

(b) For students who have already mastered the concept

Students who have already mastered the concept of bread and circuses will be given advanced discussion questions to respond to with group members.

(c) For students who are learning English

There are no English language learners in these particular World History sections.

(d) For students who have other special needs

A multitude of modalities will be used throughout the lesson to accommodate those students with special needs. The white board will be used as a visual representation of what is vocalized. The teacher will assist students throughout the lesson as needed.

Reflective Action Procedures

1. Pre-assessment

The warm up activity will activate background knowledge.
2. Motivation

Students will be motivated by the connections that they draw between the Roman Empire and our society in America today. It is suspected that many students will have thoughts and opinions to share about sports being used as a distraction in society. The teacher will encourage students to discuss the similarities between the nature of modern sports and gladiatorial fights.

3. Statement of Purpose

This lesson is designed to help students continue to strengthen their reading comprehension skills through a set of questions fit specifically for certain reading levels. Additionally, the historical content of this lesson is meant to engage students in thinking critically about modern day bread and circuses and how these public spectacles play a major role in society. As we previously saw the fall of the Roman Republic, this will set up the stage for the eventual fall of the Roman Empire.

4. Teacher Modeling or Demonstration

The teacher will explain the tasks that groups will be working on and this information will also be displayed on the projector screen. The teacher will write down discussion points that the class comes up with on the white board.

5. Guided Practice

The teacher will circulate the classroom while students are working in groups to answer questions and make sure that students are staying on task. The teacher will ask students guiding questions during the whole class discussions.

6. Check for Understanding

The teacher will check in with students to make sure they are familiar with concepts and terms that their peers are bringing up throughout the class discussion and group discussions. The exit slip at the end of class will also check for understanding.

7. Independent Practice or Activity

Students will be working in groups throughout the class period.

8. Assessment

The teacher will informally assess students based on their responses during group discussions and from the responses they write on their worksheets.
9. Closure

Students will respond to a discussion question posted on their class website (Haiku).