

IDEAS AND
RESOURCES FOR
USING

GLADIATOR

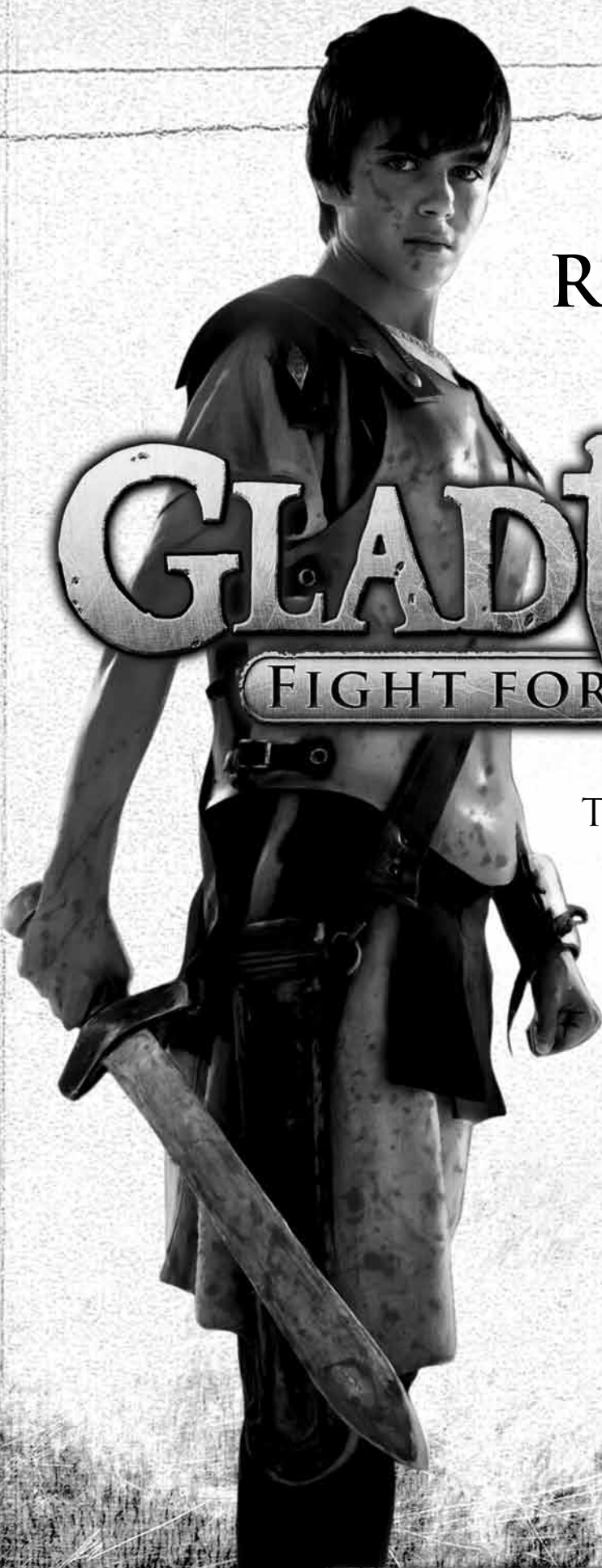
FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

THE FIRST IN A NEW SERIES
SET IN ANCIENT ROME

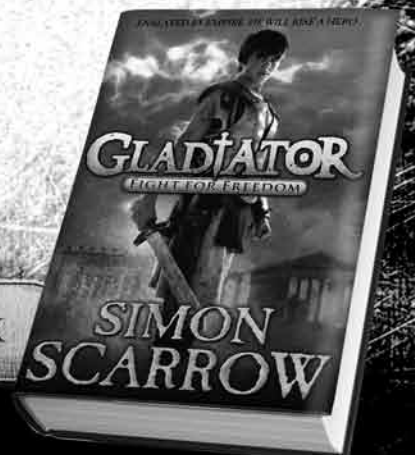
BY

SIMON
SCARROW

WITH PUPILS IN YEARS
7/P7 – 9/S1



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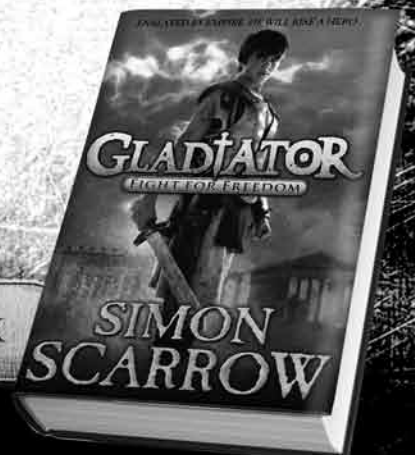
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SYNOPSIS

Marcus Cornelius Primus has grown up listening to tales from his father, the Roman centurion Titus Cornelius, of how he fought under General Pompeius (Pompey the Great) to defeat Spartacus and his army of rebel slaves. The family now have a farm near Nydri on the east coast of Greece, but Titus is persecuted by the moneylender Decimus, an old enemy, and killed in a raid by Decimus's men in 61BC when Marcus is eleven. Because Titus saved Pompeius's life in battle, his family are under the general's protection, but Decimus sends Marcus and his mother Livia to a remote farm as slaves to stop their story reaching Pompeius in Rome. They escape on the journey but are separated when Livia is injured.

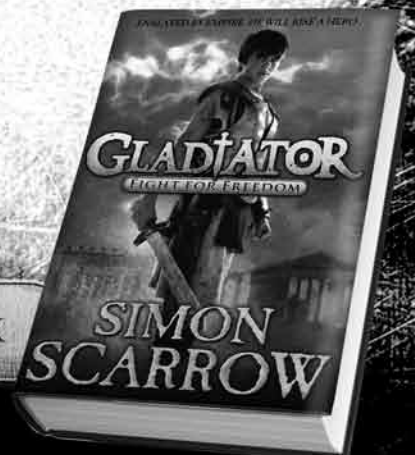
Marcus reaches the Greek port of Dyrrhacium and stows away on a ship bound for Brundisium in the south of Italia (Italy). When he is discovered at sea, the captain wants to throw Marcus overboard but a rich passenger, Porcino, buys him as a slave and sends him for training at his gladiator school in Capua in Campania, south of Rome.

In Capua Marcus is closer to his goal of appealing to Pompeius, but the school is effectively a prison with a cruel regime. In the youth class, Marcus battles with the bully Ferax, but makes friends with Brixus, a kitchen slave who tells him more about Spartacus and the continuing battle to liberate the slaves. Brixus hints that Marcus may be connected to Spartacus's quest more deeply than he thinks, but disappears before Marcus can find out more. Marcus has no time to investigate because he finds himself in the gladiators' arena sooner than he expected, facing Ferax in a fight to the death.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Simon Scarrow's passion for ancient Roman history started with his Latin teachers at school. Later he taught English, history and media studies while attempting to get his early novels published, and some of his best teaching memories involve taking pupils to visit Hadrian's Wall. In the late 1990s he established his writing career with the Eagle series for adults, which follows the career of Cato, a new recruit in the Roman legions. Inspired by the Hornblower novels of C. S. Forester, he wanted to reflect daily military life in an ancient world, which he believes is similar in many ways to our own. He enjoys filling in the gaps left by the historical facts.

To find out more about the author, go to
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BEHIND THE STORY 1

THE REAL CAPUA SCHOOL AND THE REAL SPARTACUS

Spartacus was either a Roman lower-ranking soldier (auxiliary), who was later enslaved, or a captive of the Roman legions. Like Marcus, he trained at the gladiator school in Capua (known to the Romans as the School of Batiatus, this was the most famous gladiator school outside Rome). In 73BC he escaped from Capua with around 70 other gladiator slaves who had stolen gladiatorial weapons and armour. They recruited many more slaves, and eventually Spartacus led 70,000 slaves, herdsmen and shepherds against the Roman army in the Third Servile War. Only 5,000 survived to fight the final battle with Pompey's forces in 71BC in which Spartacus is believed to have died (his body was never found). *Gladiator* begins just after the final battle.

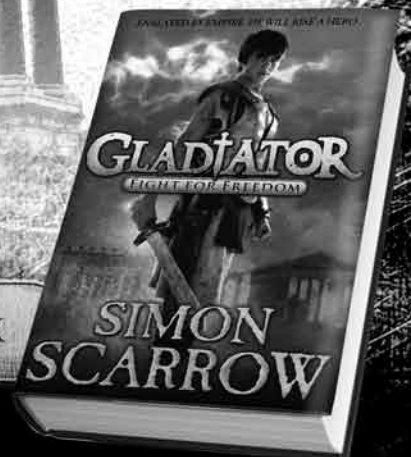
BEHIND THE STORY 2

THE REAL GLADIATORS

Gladiator is set 30 years before the Roman Empire replaced the republic of Rome. At that time, gladiators were almost all criminals who had been condemned to death, slaves who had been bought by a lanista (gladiator recruiter and trainer, like Porcino of the Capua school who buys Marcus) or criminals who had been condemned to death. Later, in the Roman Empire, free men, including former soldiers, started to enrol as gladiators, especially if they needed money to pay off debts because successful gladiators were well rewarded and treated like celebrities. At the time of *Gladiator*, however new recruits were almost always unwilling and were kept in shackles during their initial training. As they worked their way up the ranks, their conditions improved and they were paid if they survived a fight. They fought four or five times a year and each time there was a risk that they might be killed or have to kill a friend.



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IN THE ARENA

FIGHTING STYLES

The gladiators' public contests were carefully planned to show off their fighting skills. Even if they were fighting to the death the spectators wanted to see a good display before the loser was killed. Often two gladiators with different fighting styles were paired together. When the novice gladiators at Capua had finished their initial training, the instructors decided what kind of combat they should be trained in.



Retarius (net fighter)

Wore light armour because his fighting style depended on agile movement and speed. Used a net, trident and dagger to trap and kill opponents.

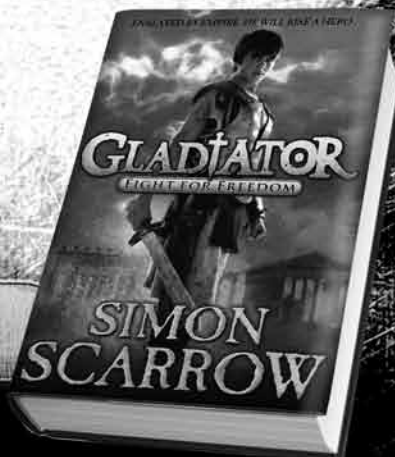


Bestiarius (animal fighter)

Fought wild animals, such as tigers, leopards and lions. Bestiarii had their own training school but some of the Capua slaves were trained to fight animals and Marcus confronts wolves in his first fight. Wore light armour and a helmet with a visor, and used a spear or knife, a whip and sometimes a cage. The animal fights were extremely popular with the public, and the rewards for the animal fighters were high – and for skilled animal fighters the fights could be less dangerous than combat between gladiators.

Secutor (chaser/follower)

More heavily protected than the retarius, but with more limited movement. Wore close-fitting body armour and a smooth helmet with small eyeholes, to avoid getting caught in the retarius's net. Used a sword and long shield that curved round the body. Extra protection on the left leg and right hand and forearm (which held the shield).



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IN THE ARENA



CROWD CONTROL

Marcus is being trained to fight in front of a large crowd of spectators (although his first fight takes place at a small private party). The gladiators survival depend not only on beating their opponent, but on pleasing the crowd. A gladiator who lost a fight and was about to be killed could be saved if the crowd thought he had fought well and gave him the thumbs-up signal. The thumbs-down signal, on the other hand, meant he was doomed to die. The spectators placed bets on their favourite gladiators and Marcus learns that a gladiator who is the crowd's favourite to win will certainly die if he loses, because his supporters will be angry that they have lost money.



ACTIVITY

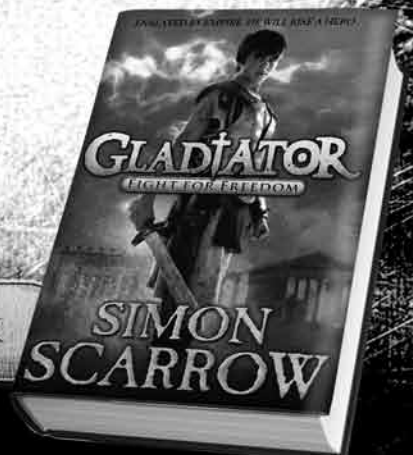
GLADIATOR CHALLENGE (without physical contact)

A pair of pupils face each other at least one metre apart. The rest of the class is the crowd.

They decide secretly whether they are a secutor, retarius or animal fighter and the teacher tells them which pupil will move first on the start signal. They then make their fighting moves as clearly as possible on the spot. The opponent responds with appropriate fighting moves (for example, if you realize your partner is an animal fighter become an animal).

When the crowd has had enough (or when the teacher gives a signal to finish), they shout 'Die!' and the two pupils then have to die as dramatically as possible, in slow motion.

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TALKING POINTS

SPECTATOR SPORTS

(You can have this discussion before or after reading the book.)

Gladiator describes a world in which it was acceptable for humans to be forced to destroy each other to entertain the public. At the time that the novel is set, gladiators almost never became fighters from choice (although this changed later). Because they were usually slaves or criminals, they had no rights and were considered to be less important than Roman citizens, so it was perfectly legal to force them to fight to the death.

Today some cruel forms of public entertainment are still popular, even if they are illegal in most of the world. While other popular types of entertainment are legal but contain an element of cruelty.

Think about the following sports and events, all of which attract large audiences:

- Bullfighting
- Cock fighting
- Dog fighting
- Child beauty contests
- Football
- TV talent shows (*Britain's Got Talent*, *The X Factor*)

For each activity or event, find out (this can be done in pairs or small groups, with each group working on one sport or event):

- Where in the world it happens
- How long it has been popular
- Whether it is legal today
- How many people watch it

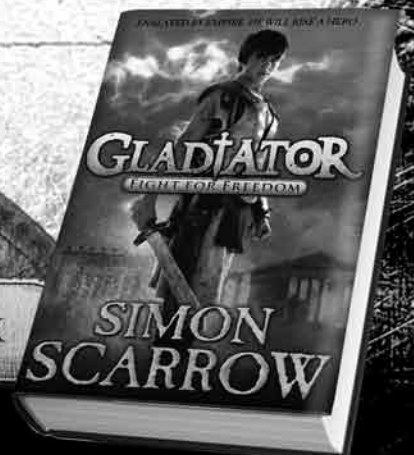
Collect images to support your research, then discuss:

- Why the activity or event appeals to the public
- How important it is to watch it as part of a crowd
- Whether it causes suffering
- Whether it should be legal

In pairs or groups, present the case for or against each sport or event:

- 'The X Factor/bullfighting/football should be banned/is a valid form of popular entertainment because . . .'

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ON THE MAP 1

MARCUS'S JOURNEY

Study the map that shows Marcus's journey from his father's farm in Graecia (Greece) to Capua, south of Rome.

Find out (by studying a modern map) how far Marcus travelled and work out from reading the book how long it takes him to reach Capua (he travels by cart, on foot and by cargo ship).

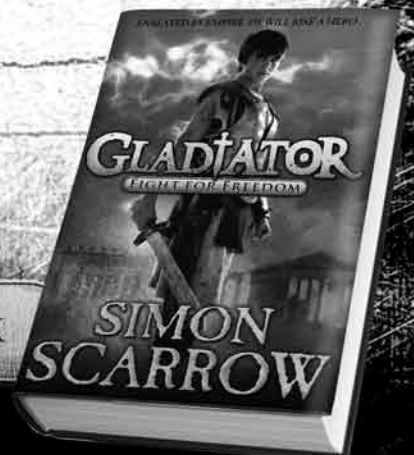
How long would the same journey take today?

The account of Marcus's journey to Capua and the gladiator school takes up half the story. Many stories in books and films are built around a journey. Think of some examples.



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ON THE MAP 2

THE LONG REACH OF ROME

Study a map of the world at the time *Gladiator* is set (around 60BC at the time of the Roman republic).

***Gladiator* introduces trainee gladiators from a range of countries and states, all of whom have been captured by the Romans:**

- Ferax, a Celt from a tribe near the Alps
- Pelleneus, an Athenian (Athens, now the capital of Greece, was then a city state)
- A Spartan, who is not named, from what is now the south of Greece
- Thracians (from the Balkans and south Germany)
- Nubians (from southern Egypt and what is now known as Sudan)

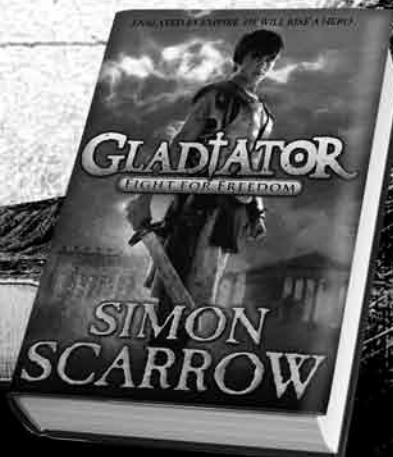
Find their homelands on the map of the world in 60BC.

Then create a character fighting card on a sheet of A4 paper (which can then be laminated or stuck on card) for any of these trainee gladiators or for Marcus. Choose a suitable name for the characters who are not named in the book. Each card should include:

- A drawing of the character looks like (there are physical descriptions of most of them in the book)
- Their favourite fighting style and weapons (see 'IN THE ARENA: FIGHTING STYLES' on page ??)
- The personal strengths that make them likely to succeed in a fight
- The weaknesses that could cause them to lose
- A short biography describing where they grew up and how they came to be captured and sent to the Capua gladiator school. For characters other than Marcus, you will have to make most of this up having researched what is most likely to have happened. But if you read carefully, *Gladiator* includes a few details about some characters' background.

Display the finished character fighting cards, showing where on the map of the world in 60BC the characters come from.

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ACTIVITY

Art/Media Studies/English/Design and Technology

FILLING THE ARENA

In small teams, pupils create a promotional campaign for an event where gladiators compete. Depending on the time and resources you want to devote to it, this could take the form of:

- Posters, tickets and flyers
- Promotional video
- Podcast
- Printed badges and/or T-shirts
- Facebook page
- Pages on the school website or intranet

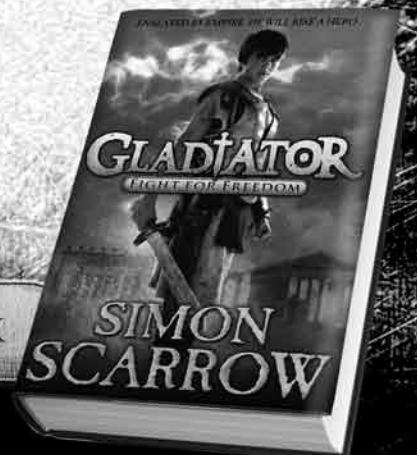
The promotional materials should include the following details:

- Date, time and location of the event (in ancient Rome)
- The occasion that is being celebrated
- The prizes on offer
- Details of two or three celebrity gladiators taking part. These could be based on the character fighting cards in the 'On the Map 2' section below, or create similar characters based on pupils in the class (who could be interviewed or photographed for promotional materials)

The teams should share out tasks to include:

- At least one designer
- At least one copywriter
- A project manager (co-ordinator/organizer)
- A production manager (who works out how the materials are going to be made or copied)

Each team should present their finished materials to the rest of the class/year, then add them to a display.



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