

Roman Monuments in British Imagination

Introduction: This lesson focuses on how the British interpreted and reinterpreted Roman history according to changing political events in British history, leading to their own national identity. Students will examine two of the paradigm shifts (republic to empire and empire to decay) with the idea of the written word as monument. Students will close read an introduction that will provide them with the necessary background, then they will use a dialectic notebook to examine quotes from British authors from various times, identifying British perspectives and writing down their interpretations and reactions to the British quotes.

Background: The history of Rome, from Republic to Empire and its decay was used by British philosophers, authors, and poets as a way to shape British national identity. Rome served as the archetype of both republican and imperial British identity. Political and historical events changed British understanding and imaginative interpretations of Roman history. When the ideas of British democracy were gaining hold, writers such as Cicero from the Republic were praised. When the British Empire was beginning, there was more emphasis on the glorification of the Roman Empire. When the British Empire was strong, they started to gain their own ideas of nationalism.

College and Career Readiness Standards:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1
Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2
Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3
Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Guiding Questions: How did the British use Roman history to build a national identity? Can the written word be considered a monument?

Learning Objectives: The students will be able to: Explain why the British reinterpreted Roman history according to changing political events in British history; Categorize quotations from British authors according to their ideal and cite evidence supporting their choice; Construct an argument using primary and secondary sources examining whether or not the written word can be considered a monument.

Preparation and Resources:

- Activity 2: Chronology of major events in England's history
- Activity 3: Close Reading and Text Dependent Questions on The Reinterpretation of Rome
- Activity 4: Dialectical Notebook (Primary Source Quotations)
- Assessment: Should the written word be considered a monument? Why or why not?
 - (No rubric is included, as students should be free to consider the assessment questions and respond to it creatively, while addressing the source and background information provided.)

Lesson Activities:

Activity 1: Lead a class discussion on the purpose of monuments (if following the previous lessons within this unit, this should act as a review). Potential questions to guide discussion: If the purpose of a monument is to memorialize or immortalize, can poetry serve as a monument? Can monuments gain importance solely through their location? Can monuments fail to serve their purpose? If so, can you give an example? Can a monument's meaning change over time and still be as powerful?

Activity 2: Chronology of major events in British history starting from the Magna Carta and ending in World War I. Students may start their chronology with the following list, and expand their timeline to be more comprehensive as they learn more.

Magna Carta

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*

John Locke: *2nd Treatise on Government*

French Revolution

Glorious Revolution/Petition of Right

English Civil War

English Bill of Rights

Start of Industrialization

World War I

Activity 3: Students will close read and answer text dependent questions providing them background knowledge on how the British interpreted and reinterpreted Roman history given contemporary British political challenges. Once students have completed reading, review as a class to ensure understanding.

Activity 4: Dialectic Notebook: Categorizing and Responding to Primary Sources. Just as the British schoolboys used to do when studying Roman history, so will your students. (Do you want to add anything on the Brits using/creating interactive, annotated notebooks? Add a visual aspect, such as pasting images or drawing?) Students who struggle with reading and writing may work with a partner. Students will read a quote, identify if they think that the quote supports the Roman Republic, the Roman Empire, the Decay of Rome, or the British questioning their own historical legacy. Students will underline the passage in the text that they think that supports their categorization. Then they will respond to the quote.

Assessment: Students will utilize the information learned in the lesson to assess and construct an argument on whether or not the written word can be considered a monument.

Extending the Lesson: Students may research and report on what other monuments were admired by the British; Students may also research the interpretation and reinterpretation of Roman history in America. The introductory lesson on Rome and American imagination follows this lesson in the unit plan..

The Basics:

Subject Areas:

History and Social Studies > Themes > Common Core




Skills:

- Critical thinking
- Evaluating arguments
- Logical reasoning
- Persuasive writing and speaking
- Textual analysis
- Using primary sources

Author:

K. Van Der Linden (AZ)

Close Reading

1. Number the ___Paragraphs_____.
2.  key ___ terms ___, names of _people_, names of ___places___ and dates.
3.   unfamiliar ___ words ___, define using context clues, and replace with a synonym.
4. Underline an author's _claims_____, points and relevant information.
5. Ask and answer “how” and “why” ___questions_____ to create deeper meaning of the text.
6. Jot down the one most important thing the author is ___saying_____ (or doing) in each section (paragraph).
7. At the _end_____ of the text, write your final impression.

The Written Word as Monument: Rome’s Legacy as a Usable Past for England

Starting in the late sixteenth century, young English aristocrats educated in Greek and Latin literature toured Europe to complete their classical education. For the British, the power of place to galvanize and catalyze imagination was felt most powerfully in Rome. Rome was a focus of the Grand Tour because although Rome was provincial at this time, the Catholic Church’s investment in restoring Roman ruins and monuments had resulted in it becoming an artistic and

cultural mecca. There was an interest in seeing the ruins and antiquities, the “bits and pieces” of Roman Republican and Imperial monumental history. Edward Gibbon wrote in his Autobiography:

My temper is not very susceptible of enthusiasm, and the enthusiasm which I do not feel I have ever scorned to affect. But, at the distance of 25 years, I can neither forget nor express the strong emotions which agitated my mind as I first approached and entered the eternal city. After a sleepless night, I trod, with a lofty step, the ruins of the Forum; each memorable spot where Romulus *stood*, or Tully spoke, or Caesar fell, was at once present in my eye; and after several days of intoxication were lost or enjoyed before I could descend to a cool and minute investigation.

Gibbon was clearly captivated by the significance of the locations within the context of the history of Rome. His experience resulting in his writing the seminal book *The History of the Decline and Fall of Rome*.

Inspiration to write books was not the only reaction to experiencing the history of Rome for the British. It was also used to shape an understanding of the present. Political events and responses to political events resulted in changing perceptions of which Roman legacy (Republic or Empire) to glorify. For example, the English had a long history of representative government through Parliament, so despite still having a monarch, the philosophy and literature of the time glorified the Roman Republic. After the start of the Industrial Revolution and England becoming an imperial power, the writings extolled the virtues of the Roman Empire. The horrors and devastation brought by World War I led to another change in perception, this time criticism focusing on Empire, both Roman and British.

Since the British self-identified with the legacy of Rome in all of its history, they were also acutely aware of the decline and fall of the Eternal City. Touring Rome and seeing the ancient city in ruins, the monuments destroyed and decayed, they questioned what their own legacy might be and what would be left of their own civilization for others to experience. If the purpose of monuments is to memorialize or immortalize, can the written word serve as a monument?

Text Dependent Questions

1. How did Gibbon’s education affect his experience in Rome? Do you think he would have written *The Decline and Fall of Rome* if he had not gone to Rome? Explain your answer.

2. How have political events changed perceptions of Rome’s history in the British imagination? How did the British use Rome’s legacy as a response?

3. How did the decay of Rome affect British ideas of their own eventual decline and historical legacy?

Dialectical Journal

The Written Word as Monument: Rome’s Legacy as a Usable Past for Britain

Quote	Response
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<p>Shakespeare: <i>Julius Caesar</i>, Act 3, Scene 2</p> <p>BRUTUS: Romans, countrymen, and lovers! Hear me for my cause, and be silent that you may hear. Believe me for mine honor, and have respect to mine honor that you may believe. Censure me in your wisdom, and awake your senses that you may be the better judge. If there be any in this assembly, dear friend of Caesar's, to him I say that Brutus' love to Caesar was no less than his. If then that friend demand why Brutus rose against Caesar, this is my answer: not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more.</p>	<p>Era:</p> <p>Response:</p>
<p>Lord Tennyson, <i>Ulyses</i></p> <p>Some work of noble note, may yet be done, Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods. The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks: The long day wanes: the slow moon climes: the deep Moans round with many voices. Come my friends, 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world, Push off, and sitting well in order smite The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths Of all the western stars until I die. It may be that the gulfs will wash us down: It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles, And see the Great Achilles, whom we knew. Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho' We are not now that strength which in old days Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are; One of equal temper of heroic hearts, Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.</p>	<p>Era:</p> <p>Response:</p>

Quote	Response
<p>Percy Bysshe Shelly, <i>Ozymandias</i></p> <p>I met a traveler from an antique land Who said: "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone Stand in the desert...Near them, on the sand, Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown, And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command, Tell that its sculptor well those passions read Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things, The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed: And on the pedestal these words appear: 'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings: Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!' Nothing beside remains. Round the decay Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare The lone and level sands stretch far away.</p>	<p>Era:</p> <p>Response:</p>
<p>Viscount Bolingbroke, <i>Letters on the Study and Use of History, Letter V</i></p> <p>. . .and I come to speak of the study of history, as a necessary means to prepare men for that discharge of duty which they owe their country, and which is common to all the members of every society that is constituted according to the rules of right reason, and with a due regard to the common good.</p>	<p>Era:</p> <p>Response:</p>

<p>Thomas Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i></p> <p>And by reading of these Greeks and Latin Authors, men from their childhood have gotten a habit (under a false show of Liberty) of favoring tumults, and of licentious controlling the actions of their Sovereigns; and again with controlling the controllers; with the effusion of so much blood; as I think I might truly say, there was never anything so dearly bought, as these Western parts have brought the learning of the Greek and Latin tongues.</p>	<p>Era:</p> <p>Response:</p>
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Quote	Response
<p>Mary Wollstonecraft: <i>A Vindication of the Rights of Men and A Vindication of the Rights of Women</i></p> <p>The time may come when the traveler may ask where proud London stood? When its <i>temples</i>, its laws, and its trade may be buried in one common ruin, and only serve as a byword to point a moral, or furnish senators, who wage a worldly war, on the other side of the Atlantic, with tropes to swell their thundering bursts of eloquence.</p>	<p>Era:</p> <p>Response:</p>

<p>Wilfred Owen, <i>Dulce et Decorum Est</i></p> <p>In all my dreams, before my helpless sight, He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning. If in some smothering dreams you too could pace Behind the wagon that we flung him in, And watch the white eyes writhing in his face, His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin; If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs, Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues, My friend, you would not tell with such high zest To children ardent for some desperate glory, The old Lie; <i>Dulce et Decorum est</i> <i>Pro patria mori.</i></p> <p><i>*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori-</i> it is sweet and right to die for your country</p>	<p>Era:</p> <p>Response:</p>
<p>William Shakespeare, <i>Sonnet 55</i></p> <p>Not marble nor the gilded monuments Of princes shall outlive this rhyme; But you shall shine more bright in these contents Than unswept stone, besmear'd with sluttish time. When wasteful war shall statues overturn, And broils root out the work of masonry, Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn The living record of your memory.</p>	<p>Era:</p> <p>Response:</p>

If the purpose of monuments is to memorialize or immortalize, can the written word serve as a monument?