



Rome's Social Class: Plebeians and Patricians

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2015600217/>

Overview/Prior Knowledge

In prior lessons, students received background knowledge on caste systems utilized by ancient civilizations. Students are also familiar with vocabulary words from this unit including: *republic*, *dictators*, *plebeians*, *patricians* and *caste system*.

Objectives

1. The students will identify words and terms.
2. The students will analyze quotations related to social class in Ancient Rome.
3. The students will analyze artwork illustrating social class in Ancient Rome.
4. Students will draw inferences based on prompting questions.

Time Required

4 - 50 minute class periods

Day 1 and Day 2- Lessons have a social studies focus.

Day 3 and Day 4- Lessons have an ELA focus.

Recommended Grade Range

6th – 8th grade

Subject/Sub-Subject

World History, English Language Arts

Standards

Social Studies

7.5 Inspect the development Roman Civilization. (Strands: Civics, Civil Rights, Geography, History,

Economics)

2. Compare and contrast how religion affected the daily lives of the Romans: describe various aspects of Roman culture, including art, language, social class, and recreation.

English Language Arts

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies

CCSS/English

RI.6.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RI.6.2 Determine central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details, provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgement.

RI.6.3 Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text.

RI.6.5 Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section, fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas.

W.6.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

Library of Congress - Teaching with Primary Sources Skills:

- Identify who created the primary source, when, and for what purpose
- Use previous knowledge to place primary sources into historical context
- Examine primary sources closely to form conjectures about their meaning and intent
- Investigate issues of cause and effect, context and change

Highlighted Strategies:

- See, Think, Wonder
- Sensory Figure

Credits

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Materials

- Primary Sources – See Resource Guide at the end of this document.
- See, Think, Wonder Handout - (Social Studies and ELA)
- Sensory Figure Handout (Social Studies)
- Secondary Sources- Social Studies textbook (6th grade)
- Secondary Sources (ELA)- <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.2.two.html>
- Patricians reading: <https://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/empire/patricians.html>
- Plebeians reading: <https://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/empire/plebeians.html>

Procedures

Day 1 (Social Studies Focus)

Introduction

- The Teacher Will (TTW): Show a scene from the video from Library of Congress - The slave <https://www.loc.gov/item/2015600217/>
- TTW: distribute a “See, Think, Wonder” handout to each student. Then, the TTW ask the following questions:
 1. What do you see in this image?
 2. How you would you describe the scene and the people?
 3. What do you think is happening in this scene? Provide evidence from film to support your answer.
 4. How do you think these people were feeling during this time?

During

- TTW: use “Thumbs UP” reading strategy: the teacher will direct students to a textbook passage on Ancient Roman Society. Next, the TTW select a reader with their thumbs up ready to read.
- Next, The Students Will (TWS) use their textbooks to find out more about social classes in Ancient Rome. They will be instructed to record information from the textbook, which reinforces and/or corrects the assumptions they made when they analyzed the image.

Closure

- TTW/TSW: create a Double Bubble Map comparing and contrasting the Life of Plebeians and Patricians.

Day Two (Social Studies Focus)

Introduction

- In groups, students will read articles—in heterogeneous groups—from secondary sources, such as “Ancient Roman Clothing Distinguished Social Class.”

During

- Distribute to students a sensory figure of a Plebeian and a Patrician as obtained from the internet. Based on their research on day one and day two, students will answer the following questions using the **Plebeian** sensory figure provided:
 1. *Thought* (What would a plebeian be thinking? OR What would they be thinking about their work?)
 2. *Feeling* (What would a plebeian be feeling emotionally? OR How would they feel about their position in society?)
 3. *Touching/Holding* (What would a plebeian be touching or holding? OR What type of tool or utensil might they be holding?)
 4. *Saying or Tasting* (What might a plebeian be either saying or tasting? What type of food they might be eating? OR What might they be saying?)
 5. *Wearing* (Make sure you dress your sensory figure appropriately)
 6. *Hearing* (What types of sounds or words might a plebeian hear?)
 7. *Seeing* (What would a plebeian see around him/her? Think about where they would be working or living.)
 8. *Standing on/Walking Through* (What type of flooring or place would a plebeian be standing on or walking through?)

Closure

- Next, based on their research on day one and day two, students will answer the following questions using the **Patrician** sensory figure provided:
 1. *Thought* (What would a patrician be thinking? OR What would they be thinking about their work?)
 2. *Feeling* (What would a patrician be feeling emotionally? OR How would they feel about their position in society?)
 3. *Touching/Holding* (What would a patrician be touching or holding? OR What type of tool

Day Three (English/Language Arts Focus)

Introduction

- The teacher will briefly review major points from the prior lessons and video presented in Social Studies classes. Next, heterogeneous groups of three or four students will analyze a quotation as an introduction into the mindset of the Romans during this time period:
- “For the nobles will be dissatisfied because they think themselves worthy of more than an equal share of honors,” (Aristotle, Politics, Book 2, 2.7; see also: <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.2.two.html>)
- The students will then discuss possible interpretations of the quotation provided. The students will discuss and share ideas in small groups and then share and discuss ideas in whole group.
- The teacher will then provide background, interpretation, and analysis of quote.

Interpretation: The upper class was unsettled because they thought they were superior to the lower class and the privileges they possessed did not show it.

Analysis: The nobles, or the Patricians, believed they were entitled to more than those who were below them. The Patricians made up only five percent of the Roman population, and they demanded to be placed on a social pedestal above all others. Taxes, political voice, and overall importance were all areas in which the Patricians demanded special treatment. The Plebeians made up ninety-five percent of the population in Rome, and they were unhappy when the Patricians were granted these privileges as the entire Republic started to become more and more corrupt. The conflict became treacherous between the two classes as the Patricians themselves began to fight from within. The Patricians splintered into the Optimates and Populares further dividing this small ruling minority. This social antagonism divided the Roman Republic.

During

The students will make observations and interpretations of the artwork (see Primary Source 1 below) provided using the “See, Think, and Wonder” Handout/Strategy:

1. What do you see?
2. What do you think about when looking at what is possibly taking place in the artwork/photo?
3. What does it make you wonder?

The students will first make inferences individually. The students will then share and discuss ideas in the previously established heterogeneous groups.

Closure

- The students will then discuss and share ideas in whole group. The teacher will ask prompting questions to guide students in understanding the artwork.
 1. What do you notice about the clothing of the people in the artwork?
 2. What does this tell you about the social class represented in the artwork? How do you know?
 3. What are the people doing in the artwork?
 4. Based on what they are doing, what inferences can you make about the social class represented?

Day Four (English/Language Arts Focus)

Introduction

- TSW introduce the Informative Writing Activity (IWA) to students, which is a summative assignment. The purpose of the IWA is to assess students' knowledge, examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately. Furthermore, this writing assignment allows students to demonstrate comprehension of Rome's social classes, gain understanding of Patrician and Plebeians lifestyles, by tying together Social Studies and English standards.

During

- TSW assume the role of a Plebeian or Patrician. Next, students choose one of the following informative writing activities: (1) Write your obituary or (2) Write a diary entry. In this assignment, students must include the following details:
 1. Your role in society
 2. Details of the Daily Life of the role you have chosen
 3. Include key details from the notes, article and film/video discussed in social studies classes from Day 1 and Day 2 of the lesson plan.

Closure

- TSW peer edit their elbow partner's informative writing assignment. Students will submit a final draft at the beginning of the next day's class period.

Assessment

Formative:

- (formal): Sensory figures (Plebeians and Patricians) assignment
- (informal): Aristotle quotation discussion and analysis

Summative:

- (informal): See, Think, and Wonder activity with Roman artwork
- (formal): Informative Writing assignment



Differentiation

- The Sensory figures assignment can be modified to accommodate learners by having them complete questions one through five.
- Accelerated learners will be provided a second quotation from Aristotle to analyze.

Supplementary Materials

- None

Teaching with Primary Sources Resource Guide

Title: Rome's Social Class: Plebeians and Patricians

Historical Background:

Ancient Roman society was rigidly divided between citizens of two social classes—the Plebeians representing 95% of the population and the Patricians (or nobility), which represented a small minority of 5%.

Source 1:



Title: Women working alongside a man at a dye shop (*fullonica*), on a wall painting from Pompeii

Link: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_ancient_Rome#/%20media/File:Pompeii - Fullonica of Veranius Hypasaeus 2 - MAN.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_ancient_Rome#/%20media/File:Pompeii_-_Fullonica_of_Veranius_Hypasaeus_2_-_MAN.jpg)

Purpose: The image will be used as part of the See, think, wonder activity to help students understand and analyze the nature of clothing during this time period.

Source 2:



Title: The slave

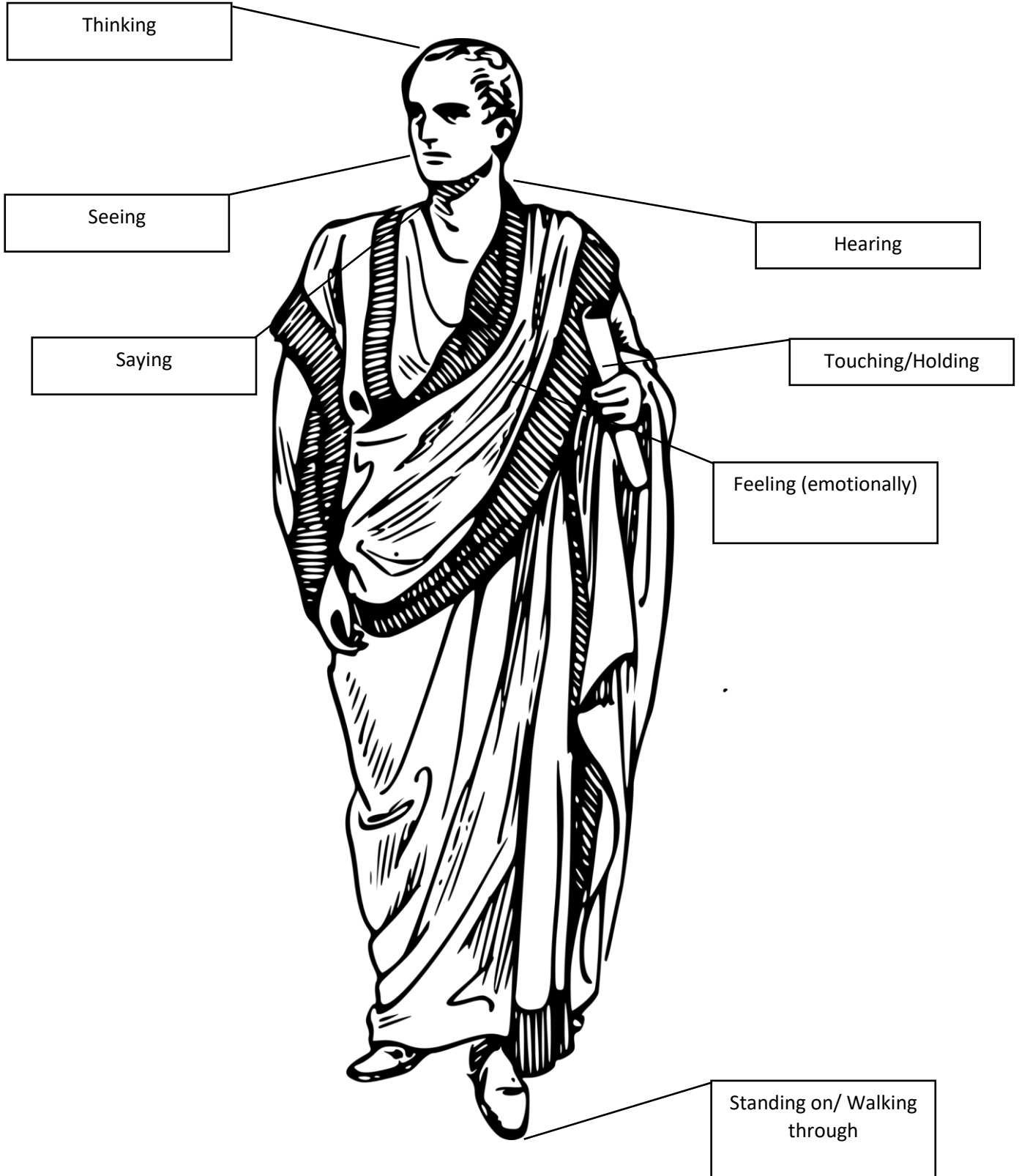
Link: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2015600217/>

Purpose: This video illustrates the social classes found in Ancient Rome.

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Plebeians and Patricians Sensory Figures

Task	Points Possible	Points Earned
Drawing of Plebeian	3	
<i>Thought</i> (What would a plebeian be thinking? OR What would they be thinking about their work?)	3	
<i>Feeling</i> (What would a plebeian be feeling emotionally? OR How would they feel about their position in society?)	3	
<i>Touching/Holding</i> (What would a plebeian be touching or holding? OR What type of tool or utensil might they be holding? Etc.)	3	
<i>Saying or Tasting</i> (What might a plebeian be either saying or tasting? Think about what type of food they might be eating. OR Think about something they might say?)	3	
<i>Wearing</i> (Make sure you dress your sensory figure appropriately)	3	
<i>Hearing</i> (What types of sounds or words might a plebeian hear?)	3	
<i>Seeing</i> (What would a plebeian see around him/her? Think about where they would be working or living.)	3	
<i>Standing on/Walking Through</i> (What type of flooring or place would a plebeian be standing on or walking through?)	3	
Visually appealing/Neat/Color	3	
Total Points Possible	30	
Drawing of Patrician	3	
<i>Thought</i> (What would a patrician be thinking? OR What would they be thinking about their work?)	3	
<i>Feeling</i> (What would a patrician be feeling emotionally? OR How would they feel about their position in society?)	3	
<i>Touching/Holding</i> (What would a patrician be touching or holding? OR What type of tool or utensil might they be holding? Etc.)	3	
<i>Saying or Tasting</i> (What might a patrician be either saying or tasting? Think about what type of food they might be eating. OR Think about something they might say?)	3	
<i>Wearing</i> (Make sure you dress your sensory figure appropriately)	3	
<i>Hearing</i> (What types of sounds or words might a patrician hear?)	3	
<i>Seeing</i> (What would a patrician see around him/her? Think about where they would be working or living.)	3	
<i>Standing on/Walking Through</i> (What type of flooring or place would a patrician be standing on or walking through?)	3	
Visually appealing/Neat/Color	3	
Total Points Possible	30	





I Think...



I Wonder...

I See...

