**Directions: Read the following information. Use it to help you on your Gladiator Interview assignment.**

**Historical Background of Gladiators**

Roman gladiators were trained in mortal combat, a form of public entertainment in ancient Rome. The word *gladiator* comesfrom the Latin word *gladius* (sword). Wealthy or important Romans often asked for funeral games to be held in their honor. In 264 B.C.E six men were hired to fight at a funeral—probably the first gladiators. The popularity of the games grew and spread throughout the Roman Empire. Eventually gladiatorial games became lavish public entertainments, especially after the Coliseum in Rome opened in 80 C.E. Roman gladiators were usually convicted criminals, slaves, or prisoners of war. Many gladiators came from the lands Rome had conquered. Although there were a few women gladiators, in 200 C.E.

Women were banned from fighting. Some gladiators who managed to survive the fierce fighting became famous or even wealthy. Men of the very lowest social rank sometimes bound themselves to the owner of a gladiator troupe, enduring branding, chains, flogging, and brutality at the hands of their masters to become gladiators. Gladiators went through intense training and were taught complex moves so they could better entertain the audience.

Gladiators were supposed to fight to the death, but if they fought extremely well the crowd could decide to spare both fighters. The crowd voted by showing thumbs up or thumbs down—although whether or not thumbs up meant “life” has not been verified.

Sometimes gladiators won prize money. At a large event there could be hundreds of gladiators. In the Coliseum, the audience could be as large as 50,000 people. After other entertainments in the morning, such as hunting wild animals and the execution of criminals, gladiators would enter the arena. They would approach the emperor and proclaim, *Ave, Imperator, morituri te salutamus* (Hail, Emperor, we who are about to die, salute you).

As Christianity spread and the power of the Roman Empire declined, the appeal of the games diminished.

In 326 C.E. Constantine began the process of abolishing gladiator games. In 400 C.E. Emperor Honorius banned gladiators forever.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**A top Roman magazine has sent a questionnaire to you, Rome’s most popular new gladiator, to fill in. *Gladiator’s Today* wants to make you a star, so tell them about yourself.**

Introduce yourself \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How did you become a gladiator? (slave, criminal, chance of winning freedom) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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What injuries have you suffered?

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Have you ever fought against animals? Which ones? (Elephants, tigers, rhinos, lions, cheetah)

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Can you tell us about the most spectacular show you’ve been involved in? (Battle recreation, sea battle, animal fight)

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Now tell us a bit more about yourself, and about life as a Gladiator.

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