

Name: _____

The Colosseum

By Olivia Mendoza

You've likely seen people dressing up on Halloween or TV with armor and swords to look like gladiators. Have you ever seen pictures of the place real gladiators fought? It's big, round, full of arches, and old.

The Colosseum (Cah-luh-SEE-um) sits in the middle of Rome, Italy. Construction on it started around 70–72 C.E. Romans celebrated with 100 days of games when it opened in 80 C.E. However, work on the building continued a few more years.

Colossal means *huge*—and the Colosseum really is big. It's still the largest building of its kind! It used to have two walls. Most of what's left is the inside wall. The outside wall stands 4 stories and 157 feet (48 meters) tall. It was about 615 feet long by 510 feet wide (189 meters by 156 meters) in an oval shape. In the middle is an arena that's 287 feet by 180 feet (87 meters by 55 meters). The Colosseum fit more than 50,000 people—some say up to 80,000!

Remember all those arches? They're entrances! The Colosseum has 80 entrances in all. Most visitors used 76 of them. People performing in the events used two. The last two were special. They were only used by the Roman emperor and his party.

The Colosseum was a gift from the emperor to the people of Rome. Most of its biggest events were free. But that didn't mean you could sit anywhere you wanted. The richer and more important you were,



the lower you sat.

The Colosseum had much more than gladiator fights. There were staged hunts of wild animals from around the world. There were plays and shows. For the first few years, they even flooded the arena for swimming



A view of the interior of the Colosseum.

horses and small boat battles! The flooding likely stopped when they finished building. It might have damaged the underground place built to keep, raise, and lower animals and people.

Gladiator fights stopped sometime in the 400s. The Colosseum was last used for shows sometime in the late 500s.

Then, for almost 1,200 years, the Colosseum was used for many different things. These included a graveyard, a place to set up shops, and a castle during war. Earthquakes and fires caused lots of damage. So did people taking stones and iron to build new things.

It wasn't until 1749 that people decided to protect the Colosseum. We still do today. From 2013-2016, more than \$19 million was spent cleaning up nearly 2,000 years of dirt. Now, more than 4 million people visit and enjoy this amazing building every year.

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- For about how many years was the Colosseum used for entertainment?
 - 400
 - 500
 - 1,200
 - 2,000
- Which sentence from the article *best* supports the claim that the Colosseum is an amazing building?
 - It's still the largest building of its kind!
 - The Colosseum had much more than gladiator fights.
 - It's big, round, full of arches, and old.
 - The richer and more important you were, the lower you sat.
- Reread the following sentence from the article.

They were only used by the Roman emperor and his party.

In the sentence above, which definition of party is being used?

- one of two or more people in an interaction
 - a celebration or festival
 - a group of people with a shared purpose
 - a group of soldiers on a battle mission
- When the Colosseum first opened, what are three different things you might have seen there?

- Pick one of the ways the article says the Colosseum was used instead of as an arena. Why do you think it was used that way? In your answer, use specific details to explain what made it good for that purpose.

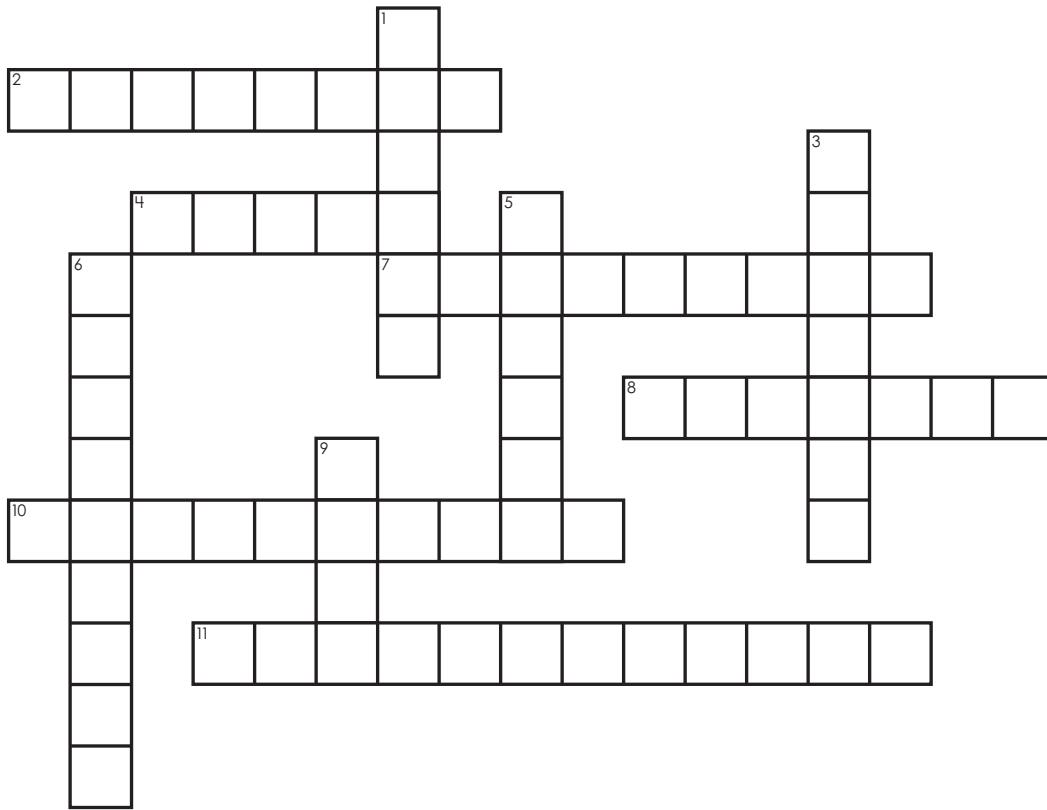
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Complete the crossword puzzle using words from the article.



Down

1. to injure or cause harm
3. to defend and take care of
5. large, strong building, especially used for defense
6. place where the dead are buried
9. sturdy type of metal

Across

2. huge
4. closed-in space used for entertainment
7. someone who fights to entertain others
8. ruler of an empire
10. honored and showed joy
11. act of building

ANSWER KEY

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c. 1,200 d. 2,000
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Accept any three: gladiator fights, staged hunts, plays, shows, swimming horses, small boat battles

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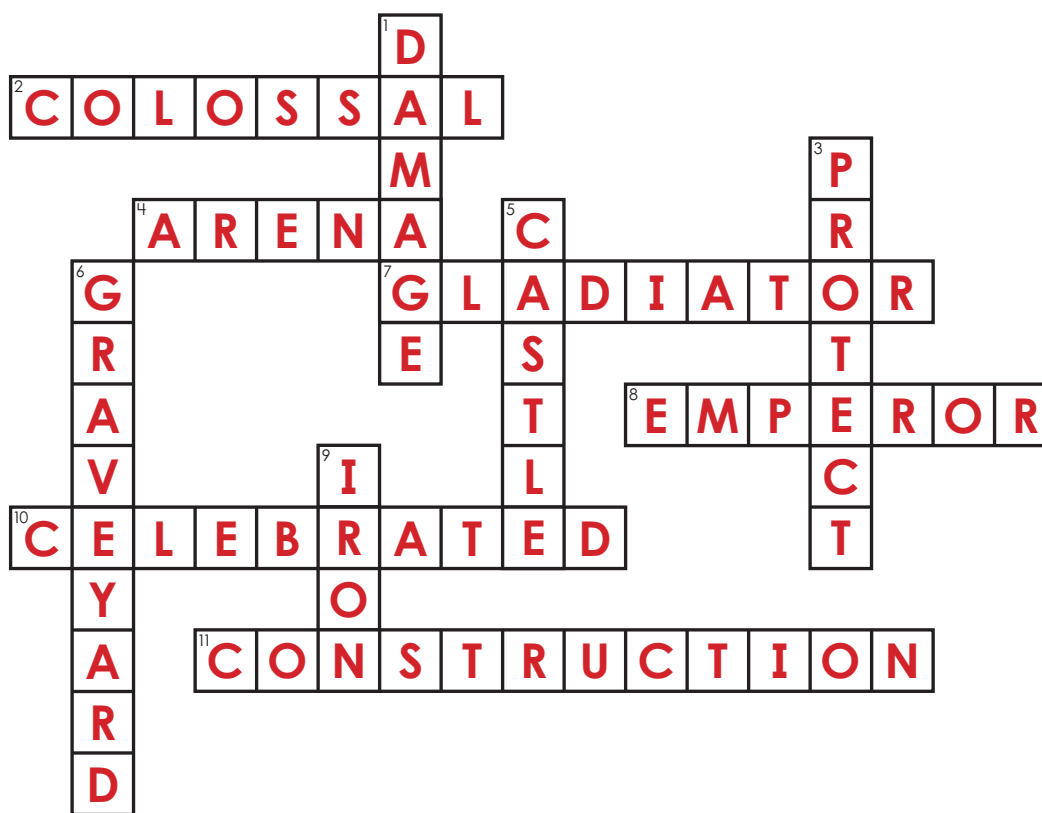
Answers will vary.

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