



Year Level: Year 6/7
Genre: Historical Narrative

“Thumbs up” for Gladiator Gaudiamus

By the time his young slave had reached the age of twelve, Marcus knew that this slave had the makings of a great gladiator. Gladiators were chosen from people who had little hope. They were usually prisoners of war, slaves or criminals. By the age of sixteen, this slave had reached over two metres in height, and with constant rigorous training he had developed an impressive array of muscles. With mock battles and instruction in the use of shield and sword, his slave had become the undisputed champion of the gladiatorial school.

Marcus knew it was time to test his charge in the arena. He gave him the Roman name of "Gaudiamus". A trumpet fanfare announced the procession of gladiators his charge was to compete against. Armed with a sword, net and small shield, they marched before the emperor. In most contests, pairs of gladiators fought until one was significantly or fatally wounded.

The victorious gladiator would then appeal to the crowd or the emperor to determine the result. "Thumbs down" indicated death which was carried out by one powerful thrust of the sword. Gaudiamus was victorious in all his contests for over six years. When the billboards indicated he would appear, crowds flocked to the arena. He gained prestige and accumulated much wealth.

Then one day, Gaudiamus fell ill from food-poisoning, but that didn't stop him from entering the arena and engaging in further combat. By his third battle he was decidedly weaker. He tripped over and his opponent thrust a sword into the base of his neck and appealed for the decision.

The crowd was staggered at witnessing their champion's failure, but in an unusual gesture the emperor showed "thumbs up" and Gaudiamus was spared. He survived and enjoyed retirement.

QUESTIONS:

Main Idea (MI)

1) In which paragraph is the reader told about gladiators fighting?

- a) first
- b) second
- c) third
- d) fourth

Author's Purpose (AP)

2) The author wrote this text to...

- a) provide some information about an ancient sport.
- b) explain how slaves were made to become gladiators.
- c) describe how a battle was won.
- d) to persuade the reader to conduct further research on gladiators.

Facts and Details (FD)

3) What happened to Gaudiamus in his last fight?

- a) His opponent thrust a sword into his neck.
- b) He tripped over due to an illness
- c) Gaudiamus was tired and weak.
- d) His opponent was better than him.

Conclusions and Inferences (CI)

4) Marcus knew that Gaudiamus was going to be a great gladiator because...

- a) he used a sword and shield with expertise.
- b) he used clever techniques to win.
- c) he was an obedient slave.
- d) he showed remarkable talent and he was tall.

Words in Context (WC)

5) The Roman name Gaudiamus comes from Gladius. The best meaning for this word is most likely...

- a) soldier.
- b) emperor.
- c) sword.
- d) flower.

Figurative Language (FL)

6) If you are victorious in battle then you have lost but are alive.

- a) True
- b) False

Comparing and Contrasting (CC)

7) What is the difference between a Roman gladiator and a Roman soldier?

- a) A soldier fights battles.
- b) A soldier fights for the emperor.
- c) A gladiator is always injured or killed.
- d) A gladiator was a slave.

Predicting (P)

8) What would you expect the gesture to be if the emperor was pleased with the gladiator's performance?

- a) clapping of hands
- b) hands raised in salute
- c) thumbs up
- d) thumbs down

Sequencing (S)

9) What happened to Gladiamus after his last combat in the arena?

- a) He retired and lived out his life in comfort.
- b) He was shamed and exiled.
- c) He was jeered at and became an outcast.
- d) He decided to begin a gladiatorial school.

Fact and Opinion (FO)

10) Which of these statements is an opinion.

- a) From an early age everybody knew Gladiamus was going to be a gladiator.
- b) Gladiamus became rich and famous.
- c) Food poisoning caused Gladiamus' s downfall.
- d) The emperor or the crowd held a gladiator's life in their thumbs.

Summarising (SM)

11) Which of these best summarises the story?

- a) Gladiamus was allowed to retire after many contests.
- b) Gladiamus had to be careful about what he ate.
- c) Gladiamus came from being a slave to one of Rome's greatest gladiators.
- d) The emperor showed Gladiamus mercy.

Cause and Effect (CE)

12) Because of the rigorous training and mock battles, Gladiamus was able to become...

- a) a great soldier in the Roman army.
- b) strong and skilful in the art of war.
- c) a teacher for other gladiators.
- d) an undisputed champion of the gladiatorial school.