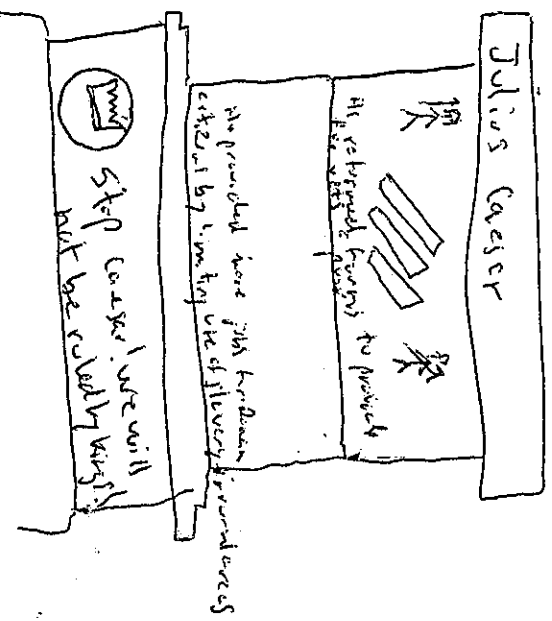


Evaluating Roman Emperors – Graffiti style

1. Read the information about your assigned emperor, and identify his accomplishments and failures. As you read, circle words and phrases that describe the emperor's accomplishments. Underline words or phrases that describe his failures.
2. Decide on the 6 most important accomplishments and failures. Carefully review the words or phrases that you circled and underlined, then, discuss whether your emperor mostly helped, place a "+" next to the 4 most important accomplishments you circled, and a "-" next to the 2 most serious failures you underlined, if you think he mostly failed do the opposite, 4 "-" next to the failures with 2 "+" next to the accomplishments.
3. Write inscriptions for your emperor's most important accomplishments. On the back of this paper, write sentences commemorating the emperor's accomplishments you selected in step 2. Each sentence should clearly explain what the emperor accomplished and how.
 - a. For example, if an emperor's accomplishment was to provide more jobs, you might write, "he provided more jobs for Roman citizens by limiting the use of slavery in rural areas."
4. Write graffiti for your emperor's most serious failures. On the back of this paper, write graffiti, short phrases or provocative statements – criticizing your emperor's most serious failures. Your graffiti should use emotional language to convey how the emperor's failures have hurt the Roman people. For example, if an emperor wants to take complete control, you might write, "we will not be ruled by kings!"
5. Visuals. You will need to have visuals to represent the inscriptions and graffiti you wrote. The visuals that accompany the inscriptions should have a formal look, similar to the carvings on real Roman columns, where in contrast, to represent the style of graffiti, those visuals should be more crudely drawn.

Example of a column:



World History –Mr. Weiss

Notes about ancient Roman Emperors

Directions: Circulate around the room to carefully examine the columns for each emperor. Record your findings about the accomplishments and failures of each emperor.

EMPEROR	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	FAILURES
Augustus		
Nero		
Trajan		
Hadrian		

Information About Augustus



The emperor Augustus (pronounced au-GUSS-tuss) was born Gaius Octavius (pronounced GY-uss ok-TAY-vee-uss) in 63 B.C.E., and later was called Octavian (pronounced ok-TAY-vee-an). His great uncle, Julius Caesar, had the strongest impact on his life. In 44 B.C.E., when Octavian was only 19 years old, Caesar gave him an important military command position. However, before Octavian took his new position, he learned that Caesar had been murdered. Caesar's death plunged Rome into a bloody civil war. After 13 years of fighting, Octavian emerged as the unquestioned victor. In 27 B.C.E. the Senate awarded Octavian the title *Augustus*, which means “highly respected.” He was now head of state and supreme military commander. His new title and greater powers allowed him to become Rome’s first emperor.

Throughout his reign, Augustus lived a remarkably simple life. Despite his enormous wealth and power, his public image was that of a hardworking and strict but honest father figure. He gained popular support with the people, for he had a good sense of humor and was tolerant of criticism.

As emperor, Augustus first sought to prevent civil war from occurring again. He gained allegiance from senators by asking for their advice on important political matters. Because the Romans feared the power of kings, he never asked for that title. Instead, he referred to himself as “First Citizen.” To ensure loyalty of the army, he had every soldier swear allegiance to him, rather than to the Senate. Finally, he established the Praetorian (pronounced pray-TOR-ee-an) Guard. These nine special units, made up of 500 to 1000 soldiers each, were solely responsible for protecting him.

To show the prosperity of his reign, Augustus began a program to make Rome safer and more beautiful. This program included restoring 82 temples and building new statues, theaters, and a large outdoor arena, or *forum*. The most famous of these buildings was the spectacular Pantheon, built to serve as a temple to all the Gods of Rome. So proud was Augustus of his efforts that he himself claimed, “I found Rome a city of brick and left it a city of marble.” Augustus also undertook other projects to improve the quality of life in Rome. For example, he made sure the city’s water system was repaired and two new water channels, or *aqueducts*, were constructed, and he established a fire department and a police force. Augustus placed an increased emphasis on learning and the arts, and he built Rome’s first library. He also encouraged many of his wealthy friends to provide complete financial support for—or *patronize*—writers and artists. Famous writers such as Virgil, Horace, and the historian Livy created their greatest works during this period.

Augustus’s emphasis on city improvements and the arts were welcomed by the Romans. However, he also pursued a strict moral crusade that was largely unpopular. Marriage,

divorce, and child-rearing were strictly private affairs before his reign. Augustus made family matters public by having laws passed to promote marriage and childbearing. The state offered rewards—such as political privileges and tax relief—to couples who stayed together and had many children, while unmarried adults and childless married couples lost the right to inherit money and property. Unmarried childless women had to pay a special tax on any property they owned. Augustus also issued laws, or *edicts*, that attempted to ban immoral public displays. For example, theater audiences had to refrain from rowdy behavior. Actors could not engage in conduct that might offend family values.

Augustus ruled the rest of the Roman Empire with organization and efficiency. The system for governing Rome's many distant provinces was badly in need of reform, and Augustus provided it. He appointed governors to longer terms in office, allowing them to develop better policies and programs for the provinces. He also paid them better salaries. In addition, he ordered a census of the empire's population, the first in more than 40 years. This made collecting taxes more efficient. Finally, he had new roads built to improve communications and trade between the provinces and Rome.

Despite his many accomplishments in governing Rome, Augustus failed to maintain the empire's security in one critical area. At the beginning of the first century C.E., the Romans spent several years fighting the Germanic tribes that were threatening the empire's northern border. At last the Romans appeared victorious. Confident of success, Augustus decided to organize the northern area near the Elbe River into a province. Unfortunately, in 7 C.E., he appointed an arrogant and brutal man named Quintilius Varus (pronounced kwin-TIL-ee-uss VAR-uss) as the new province's governor. Varus treated the people there as if they were Roman slaves, and taxed them heavily. Two years later, a huge army of Germanic tribes surrounded the Roman troops and completely wiped them out. Fifteen thousand soldiers died, the worst Roman army defeat in 200 years. Discouraged, Augustus withdrew his forces back to the empire's previous border. As a result, the Germans remained a strong force and a dangerous threat against Rome for many years.

At the time of this disastrous defeat, Augustus was 72 years old and knew he probably would not live much longer. Since there was no system for selecting a new leader, Augustus decided to choose someone as his heir, and then persuaded the Senate to accept his choice. Since Augustus had no sons, his only option was his stepson Tiberius (pronounced ty-BIR-ee-uss), the son of Augustus's third wife, Livia Drusilla (LIV-ee-a droo-SIL-a). Augustus did not particularly like Tiberius, but Livia strongly influenced him, making sure her son remained close to the emperor in his declining years. Augustus eventually legally adopted Tiberius and began to share both military and civil powers with him. Tiberius proved to be an able and hardworking individual. When Augustus died in 14 C.E., the power of the emperor transferred smoothly to Tiberius.

Information About Nero



The emperor Nero (pronounced NEE-ro) was born in 37 C.E. He came to the throne at the age of 16 when his stepfather, the emperor Claudius, died. Nero's mother, Julia Agrippina (pronounced ah-grih-PEE-na), had married Claudius in 49 C.E. She used her influence to persuade him to adopt Nero and make him heir to the throne. When Claudius died in 54 C.E., all of Rome hailed Nero as the new emperor, despite his youth. At first, Nero seemed to be a fine and worthy ruler. He reduced taxes, banned capital punishment, and forbade contests involving bloodshed. However, his later actions and behavior have given him the reputation as one of Rome's cruelest emperors.

Nero's cruelty became evident within six months of his becoming emperor. He began eliminating family members and advisors whom he thought either threatened or interfered with his rule. First, he poisoned his younger stepbrother Britannicus (pronounced brih-TAN-ih-kuss), whom he viewed as a rival to the throne. Then, after allowing his mother to strongly influence his rule, Nero decided she was interfering too much. So, he arranged an "accident" that would result in her death. When she managed to survive the accident, Nero sent soldiers to kill her. Next, Nero grew tired of his first wife, who happened to be his stepsister, Octavia. He divorced her and had her exiled on a false charge of unfaithfulness. Then he ordered her murder and had her head sent back to Rome to amuse his new wife. Finally, Nero turned against Seneca (pronounced SEN-ih-ka), his boyhood tutor and one of his closest advisors. Nero believed that Seneca had taken part in a plot to assassinate him, and he forced the aged writer and philosopher to commit suicide.

Nero's cruelty was matched by his sense of self-importance. The emperor believed that he could sing and play the stringed instrument the *lyre*. He sometimes locked people in theaters and forced them to listen to him play. He also competed in athletic events and often bribed the judges and other competitors so that he would win all the prizes. He considered himself a poet, too, and he participated in festivals where he read his poetry.

Nero's passion for the arts, however, also led him to promote them and thus enhance Roman society. He loved and admired Greek culture, and the only foreign trip he made during his rule was a visit to Greece. Nero sponsored various Roman poets, musicians, and artists. He also established literary academies, which then accepted him as a member.

Nero's sense of self-importance also led him to begin a building project that cost an enormous amount of money and was never completed. In 64 C.E. he used the Roman

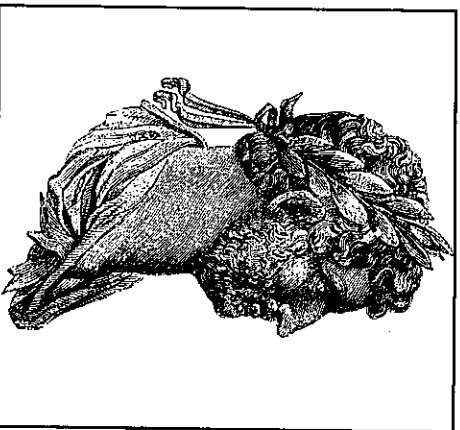
treasury to build a new palace for himself in the center of Rome. After a devastating fire destroyed much of the city, Nero took advantage of the cleared land to plan the Golden House. It was a huge new palace surrounded by fountains, courtyards, a temple, and an artificial lake. At this time, Rome needed a great deal of money to help rebuild the fire-damaged city. Instead, Nero spent enormous amounts of money on “dining rooms with ivory ceilings and panels that turned and showered down flowers, and were filled with pipes for sprinkling the guests with perfumes.” Though builders never finished the Golden House, the project ruined the Roman treasury—and Nero’s reputation.

Many senators and members of the wealthy class blamed Nero for the fire that destroyed much of the city. They claimed he was neglectful and occupied with his own high style of living. Nero tried to protect himself by blaming someone else for the fire: a new religious group known as Christians. Nero claimed that Christians “hated the whole human race,” and he became the first emperor to officially persecute them. People convicted of being Christians were put to death in horrible ways. Many were crucified, or set on fire to serve as human torches to illuminate the elaborate circuses and games the emperor held.

Despite his extreme cruelty and pursuit of personal interests, Nero did manage to maintain a certain level of stability throughout the empire. There were no civil wars during his reign. In addition, the people in the provinces respected the emperor, particularly in the eastern part of the empire. Even within Rome Nero remained popular with many of the common people. They felt he provided for their basic needs—bread, water, and entertainment.

After 14 years of rule, Nero had made many enemies—especially within the Senate. In March of 68 C.E., the governor of the northern province of Gaul (modern-day France) led a revolt against the empire. Nero was very slow to respond to the threat. By the time he finally put down the revolt, Nero had lost nearly all his support in Rome. Even his own guards and palace attendants refused to help him flee. Facing capture and execution, Nero stabbed himself to death as soldiers came to arrest him. His final words were, “What an artist the world is losing.”

Information About Hadrian



The emperor Hadrian (HAY-dree-in) was born in 76 C.E. in Rome. His father was a cousin of the emperor Trajan (pronounced TRAY-jin), and as Trajan's career advanced over the years, so did Hadrian's. During Trajan's 19-year reign, Hadrian served in several important military and political posts, and maintained close ties to the power of the throne. Nevertheless, there is some debate as to whether the dying Trajan actually named Hadrian as his successor. Still, with the help and support of the Empress Plotina (pronounced PLAH-tin-a), Hadrian became emperor upon Trajan's death.

Hadrian's personality was complex. He was a man of culture and the arts who avoided war whenever possible. He was also a practical ruler who used his energies to make improvements in the administration and government of the empire. Yet, Hadrian was also a willful and jealous person who could not tolerate open criticism. He could be quite vengeful against anyone he felt was critical of his decisions or opinions. Still, most historians consider him a very capable ruler, and one of the most intelligent emperors in the history of the Roman Empire.

Hadrian had a passion for Greek philosophy and learning, and as emperor he encouraged the spread of Greek culture throughout the empire. He surrounded himself with Greek scholars and writers, and encouraged Roman artists and writers to adopt Greek influences. He also instituted a Greek curriculum in Roman schools. Hadrian loved Athens, and made three separate visits there. He helped rebuild that declining city by completing a temple to Zeus and adding other new buildings.

As emperor, Hadrian helped reform the Roman legal system. He appointed judges to help him administer justice and write legislation. Experienced legal experts were instructed to put all of the principles and procedures of Roman civil law into one document, or *edict*. Hadrian also brought relief to the justice system outside of Rome. Until this time, Roman courts heard cases from all over the Italian peninsula. The legal process was slow and inefficient. The emperor divided the Italian peninsula into four districts, and appointed a judge for each. Legal matters in each region could thus be settled more quickly.

Hadrian also managed the provinces of the empire more directly. By traveling more widely throughout the empire than previous emperors, he was able to listen to the concerns of the inhabitants of each province. He traveled constantly across the width and length of the empire for 12 years—from Gaul (modern-day France) and Britain, to Asia

and Greece, from Sicily and Africa, to Syria and Egypt. In all these areas Hadrian appointed well-trained officials to carry out his policies.

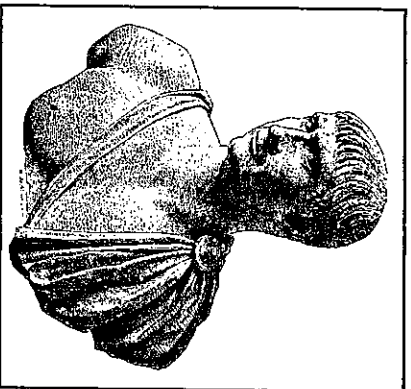
Unlike the previous emperor, Trajan, Hadrian had no real interest in military conquests. Instead, he concentrated on strengthening the empire's borders with physical defenses. He constructed barriers, forts, and castles along many of the frontiers. The most famous barrier—an 80-mile-long stone structure called Hadrian's Wall, which is still largely visible today—was built in Britain as a defense against invasion by northern tribes. The wall was built mostly of stone, 8 feet thick and 20 feet high, with some portions built of turf 20 feet thick and 13 feet high. In addition, forts and watchtowers were built into it, from which troops could guard the frontier and fight off enemy attacks.

Hadrian was successful in keeping peace in every province of the empire except Judea (pronounced joo-DAY-ah). There, a serious Jewish rebellion broke out in 132 C.E.—a rebellion Hadrian himself caused. The emperor decided to build a new Greco-Roman city on the site of Jerusalem. A previous Jewish revolt had destroyed the city more than 50 years earlier, and it was never fully rebuilt. Hadrian's plan was to build a temple to the Roman God Jupiter on the same location of the old Temple of Solomon, a sacred Jewish site. Angry Jews rose up in revolt and captured the city. The rebellion lasted more than two years. Hadrian was finally able to restore peace, but not before more than 500,000 Jews died fighting the Romans.

Hadrian and his wife Sabina did not have children. By the time he was 60 years old, Hadrian was in poor health, and he became concerned about appointing an heir. The man Hadrian adopted as his heir—a consul named Lucius Ceionius Commodus (pronounced LOO-shuss say-OH-nee-uss koh-MOH-duss)—was a very able candidate. However, he was an unpopular choice with many people close to the throne, especially some of the emperor's family. Hadrian believed that these people might try to prevent Commodus from becoming the new emperor. Hadrian forced his brother-in-law—90-year-old Julius Servianus (pronounced ser-vee-AN-ee-uss)—to commit suicide. Then he ordered the execution of Servianus's son, whom he believed was part of a plan to seize the throne.

As it turned out, Hadrian's chosen successor was in worse health than the emperor. He died before he could assume the throne. As Hadrian searched for a new heir, his health continued to worsen. He spent his final days in great pain, and he even begged his attendants to end his life. Finally, in desperation, the emperor adopted a man named Antonius Pius (pronounced an-TOH-nee-uss PY-uss) as his successor. Hadrian then left Rome for a vacation resort near the Bay of Naples. He died there in July of 138 C.E. The Roman people did not greatly mourn Hadrian's death. They viewed his methods of ensuring his successor as unjust, and he was very unpopular when he died.

Information About Trajan



concern for the people made him one of the Roman Empire's most respected emperors.

From the beginning of his reign, Trajan tried to make life better for ordinary citizens. He reduced taxes, increased the free distribution of food, and took steps to maintain a constant supply of grain. One of Trajan's finest acts was the creation of special funds, or *subsides*, for the poor, especially poor children.

Trajan also undertook a major building program in Rome to improve the quality of life. The emperor restored much of Italy's road system. He had bridges built to carry the roads across rivers and streams. In addition, Trajan supervised the construction of several impressive structures. These structures included a great water channel, or *aqueduct*, and a meeting place, or *forum*, in which a unique five-level building of shops and offices called Trajan's Market was built.

Although Trajan's actions improved the lives of many Romans, he also encouraged bloodsport events that placed little value on human life. For years, Romans enjoyed sporting events in which two combatants, or *gladiators*, fought to the death with swords and other weapons. Under Trajan's rule these events reached new heights. Sometimes as many as 10,000 gladiators fought each other as part of a festival honoring the emperor. During Trajan's rule, Romans also delighted in watching the dangerous sport of chariot racing. The races often resulted in one or more drivers being dragged to their deaths, or one out-of-control chariot causing a spectacular chain-reaction crash with several others.

Trajan was very efficient at administering the provinces of the empire. He appointed honest and reliable governors who treated the people well. He sent capable administrators to solve the problems of provinces that were suffering financial difficulties. In addition, Trajan established military colonies in the northern areas of Germania and Moesia (pronounced MEE-shee-ah), areas that he felt needed to be "Romanized"—made to adopt Roman ideas and the Roman way of life.

Trajan waged three successful military campaigns that enlarged the empire during his rule. He fought the first two against Dacia (pronounced DAH-see-ah), a powerful kingdom near modern-day Romania. The two Dacian Wars took place from 101 to 105 C.E. By the end of the four years, Rome had put down all Dacian resistance, and Trajan had taken the Dacian kingdom as another province for the Roman Empire. Trajan also expanded the empire's eastern frontier by defeating the Parthians (pronounced PAR-thee-ans), rulers of an empire that stretched from Syria to India. Victory over the Parthians extended the eastern boundary of the Roman Empire to Mesopotamia.

Trajan had much less success on the eastern frontier in one critical area: preventing serious unrest among the Jewish population. In 115 C.E. a revolt led by Jews in Cyrenaica (pronounced SIR-uh-NAY-kuh), a part of modern-day Libya, spread to the island of Cyprus and to Egypt. The uprising began as a religious revolt against the neighboring Greeks and their Gods. However, it soon grew into a direct challenge to Roman authority in the region. Trajan—who was in failing health and preoccupied by trouble elsewhere—was slow to put down the revolt. Before it was finally suppressed, more than 200,000 non-Jews were killed.

By 117 C.E. Trajan had spent more than three years on military campaigns in the east. When trouble developed on the northern frontier, he decided to return to Rome to take charge. The emperor was already suffering from a circulatory problem when he had a stroke and died in Cilicia (pronounced sih-LIK-ee-ah) in modern-day Turkey. Trajan's death—and the role his wife played in naming his successor—remain mysterious. Some accounts claim that Trajan actually named his successor, Hadrian, although he waited until he was on his deathbed to do so. Other versions claim that the empress Plotina (pronounced plah-TEE-nah) concealed the emperor's death for several days. She did so to secure Hadrian's succession by writing the Senate and claiming it was Trajan's dying wish to name Hadrian. Whichever version is true, Trajan's body was returned to Rome for burial and honors befitting a worthy emperor.