

** Please note that this sample paper is written about a modern Wonder of the World, the Colosseum.**

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I Wonder How They Did That?

The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World inspired awe and fascination during their time. The structures included on the list of Wonders were constructed by various ancient civilizations, including the Greeks and Babylonians. Some examples of these ancient Wonders include the Great Pyramid at Giza, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon and the Temple of Artemis. Because of their massive size, several of the Wonders took decades to build, and are considered to be some of the most magnificent achievements in history.

The Colosseum in Rome, Italy is the largest amphitheater in the world. Although part of it is in ruin, it is still standing and open to visitors today. To make its size easier to understand, a modern football field could fit inside it. It measures 620 x 513 feet and is taller than a twelve story building. The Colosseum could hold more than 50,000 spectators. Roman emperors would use it to hold events for the public, including wild animal hunts and savage fights between gladiators. Underneath the Colosseum is a series of storage rooms, where animals were kept. Sometimes, it was even flooded with water so that battles between naval ships could take place.

The Roman emperor Vespasian ordered the Colosseum to be built in the center of Rome, so that it would attract as many Roman citizens as possible. Vespasian also chose the site because there was an artificial lake there, that was owned by a previous emperor who was a cruel tyrant. Vespasian drained the lake and replaced it with something that the common folk could use and enjoy. Construction began around 70 AD and it took about ten years to build. When the Colosseum was officially dedicated in 80 AD, games and events took place there for 100 straight days, to celebrate its opening.

The Colosseum is mostly made of stone and concrete. Thousands and thousands of slaves were used to build it. Much of the travertine limestone that was used came from a quarry that was 20 miles away from the site. The rather new technique of using vaulted arches was used to reduce the weight of the stone, but still keep the building strong. Using concrete was also somewhat new to the Romans, and it allowed them to build an incredibly solid foundation, which is probably why the Colosseum is still standing today. Stone blocks were held together with iron clamps, throughout the structure. The floor of the arena was made of wood.

In ancient times, people were not as civilized as they are today. It is estimated that 10,000 animals could be killed in a single day of fighting at the Colosseum. Emperors would force gladiators to fight to the death, just to entertain crowds of people. To make things even more difficult for the fighters, over 30 trap doors were hidden in the floor of the arena. Despite the cruel nature of the events held there, the Colosseum remains an inspirational feat of engineering. It is pretty amazing to think about how ancient Romans accomplished such a monumental build, with none of the heavy equipment or technology we enjoy today.

Bibliography

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