**Power and people in ancient Rome**
*The Colosseum of Rome*

The Colosseum is the most eye-catching relic of ancient Rome. It stands as an imposing structure that symbolises the might of the empire. It was designed to impress and even overpower the onlooker.

Integral to its impact was its primary function as a venue for grand shows; gladiatorial combats, beast hunts and executions. The Colosseum was itself a spectacle and a place for spectacles.

In addition to gladiatorial shows the inhabitants of Rome had a love for chariot racing and theatrical plays.  These were all mass entertainments that could bring vast numbers of people together in purpose built arenas and theatres.

Why, and by whom, were these venues constructed? And what was it like to be there? To be in an audience alive with anticipation?