

*Kids & Schools Tools*

## *Colosseum, Rome, Italy*

The Colosseum is one of the 21 finalist candidates in the campaign to choose the New 7 Wonders of the World. The winners of this unique vote will be announced on July 7, 2007 – 07.07.07 and will become part of history. They will be recognized as monuments that have truly global meaning—they are part of our common cultural heritage. We can all be proud of the 21 finalists, since each of them is a unique monument that belongs to its particular culture and country in a very special way.

The design concept of this great amphitheater in the center of Rome is still relevant, having influenced almost every modern sports stadium. Today, through films and history books, we are even more aware of the cruel fights and games that took place in this arena, all for the joy of the spectators.

The Colosseum's name is believed to come from a colossus (a 40-meter or 130-ft statue) of Nero nearby, which was changed by Nero's successors into a statue of Sol or Apollo, the sun god. At some time during the Middle Ages, the statue disappeared.

The Colosseum is 48 meters (157.5 ft) high, 188 meters (617 ft.) long, and 156 meters (512 ft) wide. There are 80 arches on each of the first three levels, and the wooden arena floor was covered with sand. Its elliptical shape kept the players from retreating to a corner, and let the spectators be closer to the action than in a circle. More than 100,000 cubic meters (3,531,466.62 cubic ft) of travertine stone was used in its construction. The Colosseum was cleverly designed, and most modern stadiums have important features first seen here. Seating was divided into sections: the *podium*, or first level, was for the Roman senators, and the emperor's cushioned box was also here. Above the *podium* was the area for other Roman aristocrats. The third level was divided into three sections: a lower part for wealthy citizens and an upper part for poor ones. A wooden area at the very top of the building was standing room only, for lower-class women. Today, the arena floor no longer exists, though the walls and corridors are visible in the ruins. There are also tunnels, still in existence, made to flood and evacuate water from the Colosseum floor so naval battles could be staged. Another innovative feature of was the cooling system, known as the *velarium*: a canvas-covered, net-like structure made of ropes, with a hole in the center. This roof covered two-thirds of the arena and sloped down toward the center to catch the wind and provide a breeze for the audience. Sailors on special platforms moved the ropes on command.

The Colosseum was in use until 217, when it was damaged by fire from lightning. Four earthquakes between 442 and 1349 severely hurt the building, which was then converted into a fortress with a Christian church built into one small area.

**The Colosseum is now a symbol of Joy & Suffering!**



If you want to find out more about the exciting campaign to name the New 7 Wonders of the World, please go to the New7Wonders website at [www.new7wonders.com](http://www.new7wonders.com).

**07.07.07**

**Official Declaration of the New 7 Wonders of the World**

**... be part of the making of history!**

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