

Document Analysis Exercises – Roman Society

For each of the following documents, perform the following **THREE** tasks:

1. "talk to the text" – *on this piece of paper*, break down the quotation by identifying words and phrases that give you clues to the meaning and significance of the quote. Circle/underline words that you think have importance and write your thoughts about the words/phrases in the margins.
2. Analyze the perspective – *on the following piece of paper*, explain why the speaker (and/or occasion, audience, purpose, or tone) is important to understanding the point of view put forward in the quote.
3. Connect the document to the question – *on the following piece of paper*, explain how the document helps answer the question, "Evaluate the positive and negative aspects of Roman society."

Document A

"By my good conduct, I heaped honor upon the honor of my family;
I had children, and I tried to equal the deeds of my father;
I won the praise of my ancestors and made them glad I was born;
My own virtue has made noble my family tree."
-- Epitaph [tombstone inscription] of Cornelius Scipio Hispanus,
member of the patrician class, c. 135 BCE

Document B

"Their bodies are worn down from working in the mine shafts both day and night. Many die because of the terrible treatment they suffer. They are given no rest or break from their work but are forced by the whiplashes of their overseers to endure the most dreadful hardships....They often pray more for death than for life."
-- Diodorus, Greek historian, *The History of the World*, 30 BCE

Document C

"There is nothing more harmful to one's character than going to one of these [gladiatorial games]. ... When I come home from one, I find that I am greedier and more aggressive....I am more cruel."
-- Seneca the Younger, philosopher, *Letters*, 60 CE

Document D

"Whereas the [officials] of the most illustrious colony of Antioch have written to me that on account of the severity of the winter the price of grain has soared...all who are either citizens or residents of the colony of Antioch shall declare...within thirty days after this edict of mine is posted in public, how much grain he has and in what place...and he shall make all the remaining grain available to purchasers of the colony of Antioch....it is most unjust for anyone to profiteer from the hunger of his fellow citizens, I forbid the price to exceed..."
-- State Regulation on the sale of surplus grain, c. 97 CE