

The Last Days of Pompeii and Herculaneum

Plaster Models



The plaster models in the ruins of Pompeii allow us to visualise the last moments of the people and the animals. There are pictures of a slave trying vainly to escape from his leg irons, of a dog writhing in pain and of people embracing each other in despair.

Graffiti

The graffiti messages of the people in Pompeii also tell us something about their lives before they suffered from the effects of the Mount Vesuvius eruption:

Atimetus
has got me
pregnant.

Nobody is
heroic
unless he
has loved.

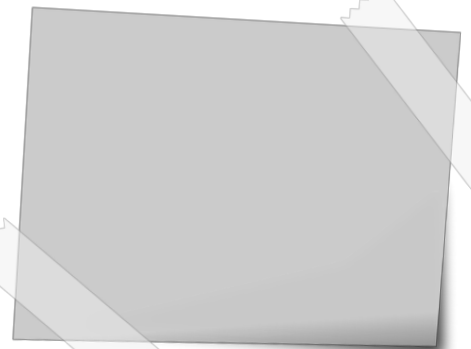


Lovers are
like bees in that
they live a
honeyed life

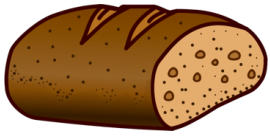
I hope your piles irritate
you so that they burn
as they've never burned
before.

♥ If anyone
does not believe
in Venus, he
should gaze at
my girlfriend.

Write your own
piece of graffiti
based on one of
the themes
referred to
above: love,
philosophy, life,
revenge...



More Details about Life and Death in Pompeii



The bread of the rich contained yeast and therefore was soft and fluffy. The bread of the poor was unleavened (containing no yeast) and was therefore flat and hard, a little like pita bread. People's inequality was even shown by the kind of bread they ate.



People used dice in Pompeii and they were not above cheating. Loaded dice have been found in the city; they had been weighted to fall on some numbers more often.

Most of the people who died in Pompeii survived for the first 22 hours or so. They ultimately died because of the intense heat, then were buried by the series of pyroclastic surges between 6.30 and 7.30am on August 25th, 79AD. This occurred almost 24 hours after the first explosion from Mount Vesuvius. A pyroclastic surge is a fluid mass of gas and rock that is both extremely hot and fast-flowing.



The ash, pumice and sand reached a height of 4 metres, burying the buildings so effectively that after several years had passed, people began to forget where the city had once stood.

It was only in 1744 that a farmer who was digging his land touched a statue with his shovel, accidentally discovering the most important archaeological site ever found.



Even though 2,000 people died, it is estimated that 10,000 people survived. They were the ones who fled from the city well before the pyroclastic surges began in the early hours of 25th August.

One More Reading...

Find and mark the following information in the text above:

- Ⓐ the time when most victims in Pompeii actually died
- Ⓑ an example showing that rich and poor ate different food
- Ⓒ the number of people who died
- Ⓓ the number of people who survived
- Ⓔ evidence of dishonest behaviour
- Ⓕ the formal phrase for a "dig" or excavation
- Ⓖ evidence that not only people died as a result of the eruption
- Ⓗ an image in which a man covers his mouth to protect himself from fumes and falling ash
- Ⓘ an image that shows the Romans' skill in road-making
- Ⓢ an indication that the Romans experienced feelings similar to those that give our lives both meaning and suffering...



My Examples of Graffiti

I don't like the look of that mountain.

If you tell me your photocopy number, I'll tell you mine.

I live with my husband but I'd die for my children.
I hope you get a boil on your nose the day before your wedding.

Knitting soothes the troubled spirit. (Elizabeth Zimmermann)

To see it through is everything. (Rainer Maria Rilke)

Online Examples

You're never too young to dream big.

Beam me up, Scottie, there's no intelligent life down here.

If you think this is bad, you should see what our government is up to.

There are no truths, only perspective.

What we do in our lives echoes in eternity.

We are all stories in the end.

Life is a million grey areas.

Nothing grows in a comfort zone.

Education is the kindling of a flame. (Socrates)

The powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a verse. (Walt Whitman)