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Engineering the Colosseum

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Welcome to the Flavian amphitheater or better known as today, the Colosseum. This structure is rich in history, but this book’s focus is mostly on its architecture. Construction started in 72 AD under the head of the Roman Empire, Vespasian. Vespasian ripped out the previous emperor, Nero’s, pleasure palace to make a place of games for the people. Still standing today, ancient texts claim that the Colosseum could comfortably fit 87,000 people and often hosted animal duels, execution of prisoners, and gladiator fights. The building is made mostly of limestone and cement and the weight is distributed by rows and rows of arches. It was quite the spectacle during the Roman Empire and still a hot spot for tourists today.

Engineering the Colosseum digs into the history of the Colosseum by mostly looking at it’s architecture. It brushes against its dark and brutal past, but is mostly concerned with its origins and construction. The book does an excellent job explaining why and how the Colosseum was made and other little-known details. It also has many bright pictures of the Colosseum today accompanied with detailed descriptions. The book is divided into four chapters, each ending with a chapter summary, resources for further study, and questions for young readers. The book also contains a glossary of terms, facts, and definitions to make the reading experience a little easier. Although the book could use more pictures and charts to help digest all the information, the text itself has many interesting and discussion provoking facts. Overall, Engineering the Colosseum is a great way to introduce kids to the history of one of the world’s most iconic sites.

Morrell: Engineering the Colosseum

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