Instructions for Educators & Chaperones

Living Spaces in an Ancient Roman Villa

This instruction sheet will help you guide your students at the Getty Villa as they work on the worksheet attached on the following pages.

**GOALS**

- To teach students the vocabulary used to name spaces in an ancient villa.
- To give students a sense of how ancient spaces were used and what artwork was displayed within them.

**TIPS**

- Briefly look over the activity before beginning and think about where you will need to take the students.
- Ask the students questions and be an active leader!
- Be flexible! If one gallery is occupied, work on another part of the activity first and then return when the gallery is free.
- These activities DO NOT have to be completed in any particular order.

**ATRIUM**

This is the first room as you enter the Museum. After completing the first activity, go to the adjacent **Gods and Goddesses gallery (Gallery 104)**, where you will find the sculpture **Venus Genetrix** for the second activity.

**TRICLINIUM**

This is located between the Inner and Outer Peristyle Gardens. After completing the first activity, go back into the Museum to the **Women and Children in Antiquity gallery (Gallery 207)**, where you will find **Wall Fragment with a Woman on a Balcony** for the second activity.
EXPLORE the spaces listed below at the Getty Villa, and learn about the uses of living spaces in antiquity.

The Getty Villa is a replica of a Roman villa from the 1st century A.D. In ancient times, villas were large country homes where wealthy Romans spent their summers. As in modern homes, spaces were designed at a villa to serve different purposes: the culina (kitchen) was for cooking and the hortus (garden) was a place to relax during the day as well as grow herbs.

I. FIND the Atrium.

The atrium was the central hall of a Roman villa. It usually had an opening in the roof (compluvium) to guide rainwater, and a pool in the center of the floor (impluvium) to collect it. Because the atrium served as the main entrance to the villa, it was designed to impress visitors and would be decorated with beautiful statues and mosaic floors. The statues might represent ancestors or gods and goddesses, who were thought to protect the villa.

EXPLORE the Atrium in the Getty Villa. Make sure to look up!

Choose your favorite detail in the Atrium and describe it below.

_____________________________________________________________________________________________

Do you think this detail has a function? If so, what does it do?

_____________________________________________________________________________________________

Why do you think this detail is in the Atrium?

_____________________________________________________________________________________________
II. **GO TO** the **Gods and Goddesses gallery (Gallery 104)** nearby. **FIND** the marble sculpture *Venus Genetrix*.

What is the date of this object?

____________________________________________________________________________________

Do you think this object could have been used to decorate an atrium? Why or why not?

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

This is Venus, the goddess of love. Why do you think a Roman would have used such a sculpture to decorate an atrium?

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________
III. **FOLLOW** your teacher or chaperone to the **triclinium**. **EXPLORE** the space, **READ** about its history below, and **ANSWER** the questions.

The **triclinium** was the dining room of a Roman home. **Triclinium** comes from two Greek words: *tri* meaning “three” and *kline*, which is a one-armed couch. Romans ate their meals reclining on these couches. Despite the prefix, large **triclinia** often had more than three couches, and might hold up to 20 guests. Some households also had a smaller **triclinium** for private parties and a breezy one for summer dining, like the **triclinium** at the Getty Villa. **Triclinia** were often decorated elaborately with complex wall and ceiling paintings, to spark conversation.

Where would you eat in this room?
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

What types of decorations are on the walls, floor, and ceiling?
On the walls: ______________________________________________________________________________________
On the floor: ______________________________________________________________________________________
On the ceiling: _____________________________________________________________________________________

Why do you think the ancient Romans wanted art on the ceilings of their dining spaces?
__________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

IV. **GO TO** the **Women and Children in Antiquity** gallery (Gallery 207). **FIND** the **Wall Fragment with a Woman on a Balcony**. **LOOK** closely and answer the questions below.

What is the date of this object? _________________________________________________________________________

What is the woman in this fresco doing?
__________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

What architectural clues can you find that might help you guess where she is standing?
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

Do you think this fresco could have been found in a **triclinium**? Why or why not?
__________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________