## Quillbot, Fluency:

Gladiatorial games provided its sponsors with extravagantly expensive but successful self-promotion chances, while providing their clients and prospective voters with exhilarating entertainment at little or no expense to themselves.

Gladiators were major business for trainers and owners, as well as aspiring politicians and those who had risen to the top and wanted to stay there.

A politically ambitious privatus (private citizen) might postpone his deceased father's munus until the election season, when a generous show might garner votes; those in power and those seeking it needed the support of the plebeians and their tribunes, whose votes could be won simply by promising an exceptionally good show.

Sulla, although still praetor, broke his own sumptuary regulations to provide the most extravagant munus ever seen in Rome for the funeral of his wife, Metella.

Any aristocratic owner of gladiators had political clout in the latter years of the politically and socially turbulent Late Republic.

Julius Caesar, the freshly elected curule aedile, hosted games in 65 BC that he justified as munus to his father, who had been dead for 20 years.

Despite his massive personal debt, he employed 320 gladiator pairs in silvered armour.

He had more at Capua, but the senate, afraid of Caesar's increasing private army and rising popularity, placed a restriction of 320 pairs as the maximum number of gladiators that each citizen could retain in Rome.

The size and cost of Caesar's performance were unparalleled; he had produced a munus as a memory rather than a burial ritual, dissolving any practical or substantive distinction between munus and ludi.

Gladiatorial games proliferated across the republic and beyond, generally in conjunction with beast displays.

The anti-corruption legislation of 65 and 63 BC sought but failed to limit the games' political utility to their sponsors.

Following Caesar's assassination and the Roman Civil War, Augustus seized imperial control over the games, including munera, and made them a civic and religious duty.

His modification of sumptuary legislation restricted individual and public munera expenditure, claiming to preserve the Roman aristocracy from bankruptcy and limiting gladiator munera to the festivals of Saturnalia and Quinquatria.

An imperial praetor's official munus may now include up to 120 gladiators at a cost of 25,000 denarii; an imperial ludi could cost up to 180,000 denarii.

The best and most renowned games would now be associated with the state-sponsored imperial religion, which increased popular awareness, respect, and approbation for the emperor's divine numen, his laws, and his agents across the empire.

Trajan celebrated his Dacian triumphs with a whopping 10,000 gladiators and 11,000 animals over 123 days between 108 and 109 AD.

Gladiators and munera were becoming increasingly expensive.

Marcus Aurelius' legislation of 177 AD did nothing to kerb it and was utterly ignored by his son, Commodus.