## Quillbot, Creative:

The gladiatorial games provided the wealthy patrons with a high-priced but very successful means of advertising their businesses, while the common people were treated to thrilling spectacles at little or no expense.

Trainers and owners, as well as politicians looking to rise in the ranks and powerful businesspeople intent on maintaining their positions, all found lucrative opportunities in the gladiator industry.

The election season was a good time for a politically astute privatus (private citizen) to put off his late father's munus in the hopes of attracting more voters with the promise of a lavish spectacle. Those in power and those seeking power needed the support of the plebeians and their tribunes, and they could be swayed by the promise of a spectacular spectacle.

During his time as praetor, Sulla displayed his customary cunning by breaching his own sumptuary regulations to provide the most extravagant munus ever witnessed in Rome, for the burial of his wife, Metella.

Any aristocratic owner of gladiators in the last years of the politically and socially unsteady Late Republic might wield significant political power.

For his father, who had been deceased for 20 years, Julius Caesar, the freshly elected curule aedile, hosted games in 65 BC, which he defended as munus.

He utilised 320 sets of silver gladiator armour while being deeply in debt.

He had more at his disposal in Capua, but the senate, wary of Caesar's growing private army and rising popularity in the wake of the Spartacus uprising, limited citizens to a maximum of 320 gladiator pairs in Rome.

The grandeur and cost of Caesar's spectacle were unparalleled; he had produced a munus as memorial rather than burial ritual, blurring the line between the two and rendering them largely interchangeable.

The popularity of gladiator contests, which were sometimes paired with animal displays, quickly extended across the Roman Empire.

The political value of the games to their sponsors was attempted to be curbed by anti-corruption legislation in 65 and 63 BC, but the laws were ineffective.

After Caesar's death and the Roman Civil War, Emperor Augustus took control of the games and made the giving of munera a civic and religious obligation.

Revisions he made to sumptuary legislation limited gladiator munera to the festivals of Saturnalia and Quinquatria and controlled private and public spending on munera, which he said would prevent bankruptcies among the Roman aristocracy.

It was decreed that an imperial praetor could have no more than 120 gladiators in his official munus at a cost of no more than 25,000 denarii, and that an imperial ludi could cost no less than 180,000 denarii.

The most prestigious sporting events around the empire would now be associated with the imperial worship supported by the state, so increasing the legitimacy of the emperor's divine numen, the legitimacy of his laws, and the legitimacy of his agents in the eyes of the general populace.

Trajan allegedly held 123-day-long celebrations of his Dacian victory between AD 108 and 109, with 10,000 gladiators and 11,000 animals.

The ever-increasing price of gladiators and munera showed no signs of stopping.

Marcus Aurelius attempted to halt it with legislation in 177 AD, but his son, Commodus, mostly disregarded it.