## Quillbot, Standard:

Gladiatorial competitions provided its sponsors with extravagantly expensive but successful possibilities for self-promotion while providing thrilling entertainment to their clients and prospective voters at little to no expense to them.

Gladiators became to be a lucrative industry for owners and trainers, as well as for wealthy politicians and those who had already achieved success and desired to maintain it.

Since those in power and those seeking it depended on the support of the plebeians and their tribunes, whose votes may be gained with the mere promise of a particularly fine performance, a politically aspirant privatus (private citizen) would postpone his deceased father's munus until election season.

The most extravagant munus ever witnessed in Rome was given by Sulla during his tenure as praetor, breaching his own sumptuary norms to pay for the funeral of his wife, Metella.

Any aristocratic gladiator owner had political clout at his disposal in the latter years of the socially and politically turbulent Late Republic.

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

He employed 320 gladiator pairs in silvered armour despite having a sizable personal debt.

He had more available in Capua, but the senate set a cap of 320 pairs as the maximum number of gladiators any citizen may maintain in Rome in light of the recent Spartacus uprising and out of concern for Caesar's expanding private army and growing popularity.

The size and extravagance of Caesar's theatrics were unparalleled; he had staged a munus as a commemoration ceremony rather than a burial ritual, erasing any useful or significant distinction between munus and ludi.

Gladiatorial sports were popular throughout the republic and abroad, sometimes associated with beast exhibits.

The political value of the games to its sponsors was attempted to be limited by anti-corruption legislation in 65 BC and 63 BC, but they were unsuccessful.

Augustus took over imperial control of the games, including munera, when Caesar was assassinated and the Roman Civil War broke out. He also formalised their supply as a civic and religious obligation.

In order to prevent the Roman aristocracy from becoming bankrupt, he revised the sumptuary rule, capping both private and public spending on munera and limiting gladiator munera to the festivals of Saturnalia and Quinquatria.

An imperial ludi could now cost no less than 180,000 denarii, while an imperial praetor's official munus was now limited to 120 gladiators at a maximum cost of 25,000 denarii.

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

Trajan reportedly used 10,000 gladiators and 11,000 beasts over the course of 123 days to commemorate his triumphs over the Dacians in 108 and 109 AD.

Gladiators and munera kept going up in price, out of control.

Marcus Aurelius' legislation from 177 AD did little to kerb it and was utterly disregarded by his son Commodus.