

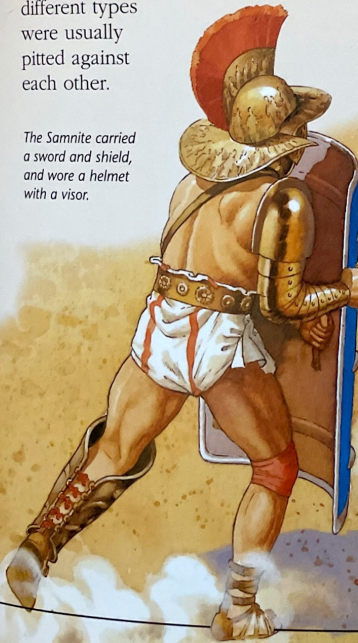
In beast hunts, like the one shown here, as many as 5,000 animals might die in a single day.



## GLADIATORS

Gladiator fights took place in the afternoon. Most gladiators were slaves, criminals or prisoners of war who were forced to fight each other, but some were paid volunteers. A very small number of gladiators were women. There were many types of gladiators, each with different weapons and costumes, and different types were usually pitted against each other.

The Samnite carried a sword and shield, and wore a helmet with a visor.



Gladiators often fought to the death, although anyone who was badly wounded could appeal to the emperor for mercy. After consulting the crowd, the emperor gave a signal with his thumb. Experts think the 'thumbs up' sign meant that the gladiator should be allowed to live.



The retiarius fought with a net and trident.

The murmillo was a heavily armed gladiator who wore a helmet crowned with a fish.



The Thracian had a curved dagger and a small, round shield.

Victorious gladiators received money and a crown, and those who survived long enough could become rich and famous - a little like today's rock stars. After many victories, a gladiator might be given a wooden sword, which meant that he was a free man. Many freed fighters became trainers at special gladiator schools.

### INTERNET LINK

For links to websites where you can prepare a gladiator for battle, see their weapons and tour the Colosseum, go to [www.usborne-quicklinks.com](http://www.usborne-quicklinks.com)

