

**BOOK OF TIME**
HISTORICAL ADVENTURES

ACTIVITY PACK · KS1-KS2 HISTORY

Anatomy of a Roman Centurion

AD 122 – Guarding the frontier of Hadrian's Wall

M eet the centurion. He is an officer in the Roman army. About eighty soldiers follow his orders. He stands guard on **Hadrian's Wall** — the northernmost edge of the Roman Empire — in the year **AD 122**. Look

carefully at his armour and equipment. Each numbered label points to something Roman soldiers really wore or carried.

FOCALE

A woollen scarf knotted at the throat — it stopped the iron armour rubbing his neck raw.

LORICA SEGMENTATA

Segmented iron plate armour — strong enough to stop a sword, flexible enough to march in.

CINGULUM

The soldier's studded leather belt — it carried his sword and marked him out as a legionary.

**TRANSVERSE CREST**

A sideways horsehair crest on the helmet — the mark of a centurion, seen from the front by his men.

GLADIUS

A short Roman sword worn on the hip — the standard weapon of the legions.

DID YOU KNOW? The soldiers on the Wall didn't all come from Rome. Some marched here from **Syria**, some from **North Africa**, some from **Germany**. Hadrian's Wall was guarded by people from all across the Roman Empire.



Your Turn: Label the Centurion

NAME _____

CLASS _____

Instructions. Look at the centurion. Can you remember what each numbered part is called?
Write your answer in the box.



1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

BONUS CHALLENGE

In one sentence, explain why a centurion's helmet had a sideways crest instead of a front-to-back one.

Answers are on Page 5. No peeking!



Words of the Day

Three Roman words to add to your vocabulary. Each one is used in the Book of Time mini-series.



* FRONTIER

Definition: The edge or boundary of a country or empire.

The Romans thought of Hadrian's Wall as the **frontier** of their empire in Britain — beyond it, they did not rule.



* CENTURION

Definition: A Roman army officer who commanded about eighty soldiers.

The word “centurion” comes from the Latin *centum*, meaning **one hundred**. That's where our word “century” comes from too.



* HYPOCAUST

Definition: A Roman underfloor heating system that used hot air flowing beneath raised floors to warm rooms.

The Romans invented **central heating** two thousand years ago!

Vocabulary Challenge – Definition Matching

Draw a line from each word on the left to its correct definition on the right.

FRONTIER	· ·	An underfloor heating system used by the Romans.
CENTURION	· ·	The silver coin used by the Romans.
HYPOCAUST	· ·	A Roman officer in charge of about 80 soldiers.
DENARIUS	· ·	The edge or boundary of an empire.

(One of these words — *DENARIUS* — was in the video too. Can you spot it?)

Vocabulary Challenge – Sentence Building

Use each word in a sentence about Roman Britain. Say something you learned from the video.

FRONTIER

CENTURION

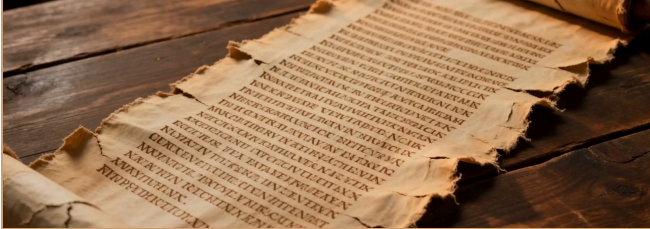
HYPOCAUST



Then vs. Now

Two Roman inventions that we still use today — but in a very different form.

THEN — ROMAN WRITING TABLET



NOW — TEXT MESSAGE OR EMAIL



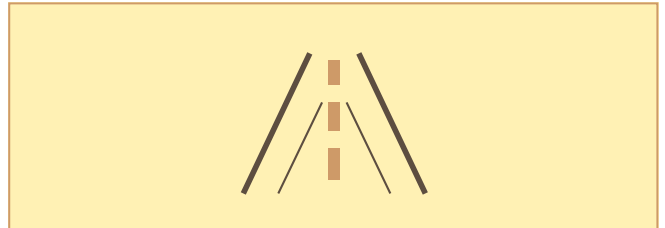
Roman soldiers on Hadrian's Wall wrote to their friends and families on thin **wooden tablets**. Some of these were found at a fort called **Vindolanda** — real letters from real Roman soldiers, still readable after almost two thousand years.

1. What's the same about the Roman tablets and a modern text message?
2. What's different?

THEN — ROMAN STONE ROAD



NOW — MODERN MOTORWAY



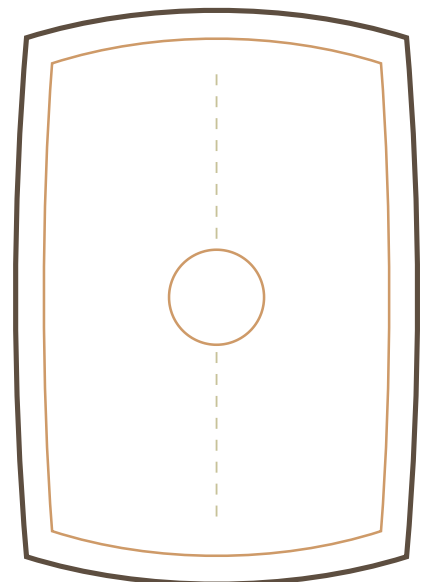
The Romans built long, **straight stone roads** across Britain. Some of them are still there today — modern British roads and motorways run right along the old Roman routes.

1. Why do you think the Romans made their roads so straight?
2. If you were building a road today, would you copy the Roman way?

Design Your Own Legionary Shield

Roman legionaries painted bold patterns and animals on their shields — eagles, thunderbolts, wings — so their unit could be recognised in battle. **Design your own shield motif**. Keep it symmetrical (both sides the same), and give it a meaning.

MY SHIELD STANDS FOR _____





Answer Key & Curriculum Map

FOR ADULTS — NOT FOR PUPILS

ANSWER KEY — PAGE 2

1. Transverse Crest (sideways helmet crest)
2. Lorica Segmentata (segmented plate armour)
3. Gladius (short Roman sword)
4. Focale (woollen neck scarf)
5. Cingulum (studded soldier's belt)

Bonus: The sideways crest let his soldiers pick him out from the front of the formation, so they could see who to follow.

KS2 CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

Programme of study — History, Key Stage 2: "Pupils should be taught about the Roman Empire and its impact on Britain ... including Hadrian's Wall ... 'Romanisation' of Britain ... the impact of technology, culture and beliefs."

PACK ACTIVITY	KS2 OUTCOME ADDRESSED
Pages 1 & 2 — Centurion diagram + worksheet	The power of the Roman army; roles within it.
Page 3 — Words of the Day	Chronology and vocabulary; Latin roots in modern English.
Page 4 — Then vs. Now	'Romanisation' — impact of technology and culture.
Page 4 — Shield design	Cross-curricular link to Art & Design.
Page 5 — Family talking points	Diverse Roman Britain — the multi-cultural garrison.

KS1 LIGHT-TOUCH ADAPTATION

- Page 1 works as a display piece.
- Page 2 becomes an oral matching task (teacher reads label, child points).
- Page 3 — pick **CENTURION** only for a single WOTD.
- Page 4 shield design is a natural KS1 fit.

FAMILY TALKING POINTS

1. If you had built a wall across the country, where would you have put it and why?
2. The Roman soldiers on the Wall came from all over the empire — Syria, North Africa, Germany. What do you think they missed most about home?
3. The Romans had central heating two thousand years before us. What other Roman invention do we still use?
4. What would surprise a Roman soldier most about our world today?

ANSWER KEY — PAGE 3 MATCHING

- **FRONTIER** → The edge or boundary of an empire.
- **CENTURION** → A Roman officer in charge of about 80 soldiers.
- **HYPOCAUST** → An underfloor heating system used by the Romans.
- **DENARIUS** → The silver coin used by the Romans.

LESSON-FLOW SUGGESTION

- **Option A (single lesson, ~50 min)** — watch all three Shorts, discuss Page 1 diagram, worksheet, vocabulary, class Then vs. Now discussion, homework: shield design.
- **Option B (homework pack)** — family watches the arc, child completes the pack, family talking points at dinner.

EXTENSION RESEARCH (ADVANCED)

1. Find out about the **Vindolanda Tablets** — what did ordinary Roman soldiers write about in their letters home?
2. Compare **Hadrian's Wall** with the **Antonine Wall** — why do you think the Antonine Wall was abandoned?

Every episode is checked by a former primary school teacher before release. This pack is free to print, share with your class, and use at home. Please do not modify or resell it.



Where in History?

Hadrian's Wall was built around **AD 122**. That was almost **two thousand years ago**. Here's where it sits on the timeline of British history you'll learn about in Key Stage 2.



Book of Time will visit them all.



About Book of Time

Book of Time is a UK curriculum-aligned YouTube channel for primary school children. Every episode is checked by a former primary school teacher before it's released.

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