

# Legion life in the Roman army

1 February – 23 June 2024  
Schools resource cards

The British  
Museum



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Written by Terry Deary, Illustrations © Martin Brown

Bronze cavalry helmet, England, 1st century AD.  
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Ages  
7–11

KS2

# Find all these objects

## Sandal

Enlisting in the army



1

## Rider

Enlisting in the army



2

## Tombstone

Ranks and roles



3

## Standard

Ranks and roles



4

## Armour

Dressing for battle



5

## Pickaxe

Camps and campaigns



6

## Tombstone

Fort life



7

## Dog

Fort life



8

## Section 1

# Enlisting in the army



Find this sandal

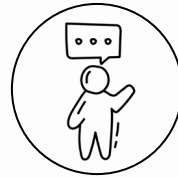


This leather sandal has iron hobnails (studs) in the sole to give it grip. It was laced up over the top of the foot. In warm weather, sandals were cooler than boots and in cooler weather socks kept the feet warm and clean.



Compare this Roman sandal with your shoes.

- What is the same and what is different?



Discuss how comfortable you think these Roman sandals would be on a long march.

WE STARTED THE SOCKS AND SANDALS TREND

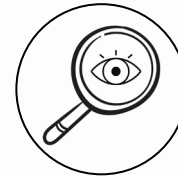


## Section 1

# Enlisting in the army



Find this figure of a rider

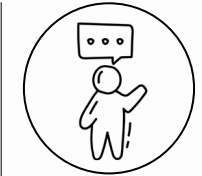


The Roman army included foot soldiers and cavalry soldiers who rode on horses. The animal this soldier rode into battle on is missing but can you look for his...

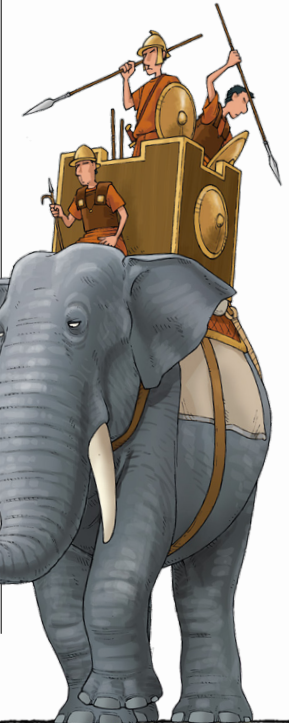
- Tunic
- Cloak
- Boots
- Round shield



The Roman army recruited soldiers from across the empire, which spanned from Spain to Syria. This soldier came from Mauretania in the Roman province of North Africa.



Discuss how it would feel to be serving in the army a long way from home.



## Section 2

# Ranks and roles

Find this tombstone



This tombstone was set up for a centurion at Colchester who died in about AD 43–49. The four lines of Latin writing translate as: *Marcus Favonius Facilis, son of Marcus, of the Pollian voting-tribe, centurion of the Twentieth Legion, lies buried here; Verecundus and Novicius, his freedmen, set this up.* Sometimes a single letter or a group of letters is used to represent a word. For example, M is used like an initial letter and tells us his name was Marcus.



Can you search for the following?

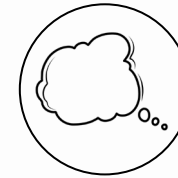
- M = his name was Marcus
- LEG = legion
- XX = 20
- Verecundus et Novicius = the names of the two people who set the tombstone up



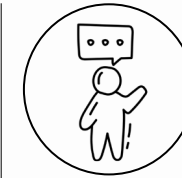
## Section 2

# Ranks and roles

Find this standard



This metal fitting was put on top of a tall wooden pole to make a military standard. Standards were a symbol of the unit's identity and were carried into battle. It helped to keep a unit of soldiers together because they could see the top of the standard above the fighting. This one shows a charging boar (a wild pig). Boars were very fierce animals!



What symbol would you choose to go on top of your standard and what would this symbol tell other people about your skills and successes?



### Section 3

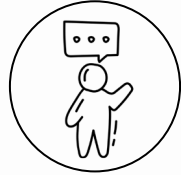
## Dressing for battle

*Find this armour*



This armour is made from strips of metal which have been bent into curved shapes. Leather straps hold the metal strips together. It was found by

archaeologists along with other pieces of armour, weapons and personal items which all belonged to a Roman soldier at Corbridge fort in northern England.



Imagine you are wearing this armour. Discuss with the person next to you...

- Which parts of the body and which important internal organs would this armour protect?
- What kinds of armour would a soldier wear to protect other parts of their body?



### Section 4

## Camps and campaigns

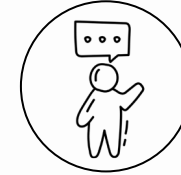


Soldiers had to build and look after their forts. The fort was where they lived and worked.



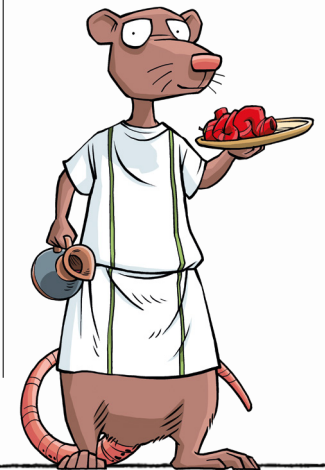
This pickaxe is a useful tool. It could be used to build a new fort, chop wood or dig a ditch as part of everyday life at a fort.

*Find this pickaxe*



What other work would have to be done at a fort? Discuss which jobs you would like to try...

- Mending armour and weapons
- Looking after soldiers who were ill or injured
- Cooking meals



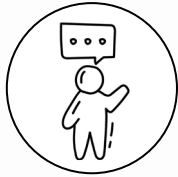
## Section 5 Fort life



Find this  
tombstone



This tombstone was set up in memory of the daughter of a soldier stationed at a fort in Cumbria. It shows her at a Roman banquet. It is carved from sandstone and it is broken.



The tombstone shows part of another person standing by the woman's side. Discuss who you think they are and what they are doing.



Look at the tombstone and choose the correct answer:

**How is she positioned?**

- Sitting on a chair
- Lying on a sofa
- Standing up

**What furniture is in front of her?**

- Cupboard
- Bed
- Small table

**What is she holding in her left hand?**

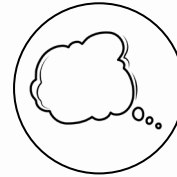
- Spoon
- Two-handed cup
- Plate of food

**What is tucked under the sofa?**

- Bowl of fruit
- Square board game
- Shoes

Illustrations © Martin Brown.

## Section 5 Fort life

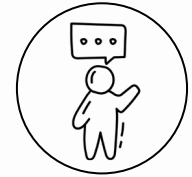


Find  
this dog



This is a statue of a large Molossian hound. It guarded the gateway at a Roman fort. Its loud bark would warn people if somebody was approaching. Dogs

were also taken out hunting by senior officers at the fort. The emperor Hadrian even praised the guard dog at a fort he was visiting to inspect the troops.



Discuss other animals found at forts with the person next to you...

- What animals would keep mice and rats away from the food stores?
- What animals would provide milk to drink?
- What animals would the cavalry soldiers ride?

IT WAS JUST  
A LITTLE BITE  
OF BREAD!



Illustrations © Martin Brown.