

# Classroom Activity Ideas



**We hope that a visit to the exhibition *Constantine the Great* will inspire you to try some of these follow-up classroom activities!**

These activities have been designed for Key Stage 2 pupils, but can be adapted to suit other ages.

If you would like to share your work with the museum or other visiting schools please contact Janine Taylor ([janine.taylor@ymt.org.uk](mailto:janine.taylor@ymt.org.uk)) - we'd love to hear what you've been up to!

# Looking at Hoards!

- Ask pupils to imagine that they are archaeologists of the future and have found a hoard dating from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. They have to write a report/newspaper report and must draw or photograph what they have found.



They could create a display of some of the things that might be included.

- What are their most valuable items?
- What sort of things would people of today want to put in a hoard?
- Would the items chosen survive if they were buried?
- How could they mark the place of the hoard so that they knew where it was but no one else could find it?
- Roman Hoards such as coins were often put in pots or jars. What would they bury their hoard in?



## A Seal of Approval!

- Insignias were rings which contained gemstones. A design was carved in the stone and the ring could be pushed into hot wax and used as a seal.

To make a large scale model of an insignia:

- Take a piece of soap with a flat face and no pattern on it.
- Carve a design in the face of the soap - make sure soap shavings are removed.
- Instead of using wax, cover the design with plasticine.
- Remove the plasticine carefully - the design carved in the soap should stand up in the plasticine.

## In mint condition...



- Discuss the minting of commemorative coins - do any of the children have one (e.g. the recently minted £5 Golden Jubilee coin)?
- Ask pupils to design a commemorative coin. Don't forget - the Yorkshire Museum is running a competition for children throughout the exhibition and you can pick up free entry postcards for your class in the exhibition!



## Symbols and their meanings...

- Ask pupils to design a symbol for their class, using letters that work in a similar way to a Chi-Ro.
- Ask pupils to think of positive statements about their class and make up a phrase from the initials of each word.

The word should be something that can be shown pictorially e.g. **C**reative **A**chieving **T**eam, **D**ynamic **O**rganising **G**roup.

- Create art work using these symbols. This could include designs for mosaics or for a modern effect make wall paper or curtain fabric.
- Logos are important ways of getting messages across today - ask pupils to find examples of logos - are any of these pictures which 'match' the product of the company?

# Imprints of the past

- Make Roman clay tiles. Decorate them with impressions of things pupils think would have left marks on the tiles in Roman York:
  - Fingers
  - Animal tracks
  - Leaves
  - Seeds
  - Dropped coins
- Ask pupils to think about what modern impressions might be left if tiles were left to dry today?
  - Bike tyre tracks
  - Sweets
  - Marbles?
- Pupils could write a story of the events leading up to the child running across the tile on display in the exhibition.  
*Why were they running across the tiles? Were they chasing their cat or something more sinister?*



## Work out what it is

- When archaeologists find a wall painting it isn't always clear from the remains what the full image is. Ask your pupils to become archaeological detectives of the future. Take a picture and 'white-out' large chunks of the picture. Photocopy it and ask the children to fill in the missing parts. Then compare their completed pictures with the original picture. To make it harder use an image of something they may not be familiar with. You could also do this activity using an interactive whiteboard. By changing the amount of the image revealed, you can show how hard it is when there is only a small amount of the original image remaining.

# Dressing for the Occasion!

- Dress your class as Romans - you could even have a Roman feast day in school!

To make a tunic for a girl

- Take a rectangular piece of cotton material and fold it in half.
- Sew down one edge leaving about 15cm for an arm hole.
- On the other side about 15 cm from cut a matching arm hole.
- On top edge which rests on your shoulders, leave a hole for your head, and secure either side by a safety pin or small stitches every 10 cm.
- If you are a girl the tunic should go to down to your feet.

To make a tunic for a boy:

- Take a rectangular piece of cotton material and fold it in half.
- Sew down one edge leaving about 15cm for an arm hole.
- On the other side, at about 15 cm from the top, cut a matching arm hole.
- On top edge which rests on your shoulders, leave a hole for your head, sewing either side.
- The tunic should go down to your knees.

To make the toga:

- A toga is just one large piece of material cut into a semi circle. The length was normally about twice the height of the wearer and its width about three times the width of the wearer.

To make a stola:

- Follow the directions for making a tunic. This time leave/ cut c30 - 40 cm for arm holes.
- Gather the material up with one pin on each shoulder. Wear over the tunic with a belt. You should be able to see the tunic under the stola.



Visit the following websites for more information on Roman clothing:

[http://members.ozemail.com.au/~chrisandpeter/radical\\_romans/male/male.htm](http://members.ozemail.com.au/~chrisandpeter/radical_romans/male/male.htm)

[www.vroma.org/~bmcmanus/clothing.html](http://www.vroma.org/~bmcmanus/clothing.html)

[http://members.ozemail.com.au/~chrisandpeter/radical\\_romans/female/female.htm](http://members.ozemail.com.au/~chrisandpeter/radical_romans/female/female.htm)

<http://www.vroma.org/~bmcmanus/clothing2.html>



## Make your own Wall plaster

Line the bottom of seed trays with paper/cloth and then fill with a 2cm layer Plaster of Paris. The paper should come up to the top of the tray or beyond. Try to get the surface as smooth as possible. Children can paint their own picture.

If you wish, the class could have a go at being a conservator and piece a large picture together. To do this give them each part of the design of a larger picture. You will need to draw the design in and tell them which colours to use.

When the painting has been completed, carefully pull the wall painting out of the tray using the paper/cloth to help lift it. Ask pupils to put the completed design together. It is up to you whether you give them your original design to work from or whether they have to work it out from scratch, as a conservator would. Paper/ cloth can be cut back if desired.

If plaster cracks and break, then glue it back together - which is what a conservator does with wall plaster when it is found.

# Mosaics

Create a copy book of mosaic designs, asking each pupil to contribute a design, by colouring squares on square printed paper or using stick on squares on paper.



Designs could include:

- Subjects specific to the pupil's family - the Hinton St Mary design must have been specifically requested
- Designs which tell a story - the Hinton St Mary mosaic is linked to Psalm 22
- A modern day interpretation of a four seasons mosaic - what would go in the centre? What would represent the four seasons today?
- Use motifs designed in other parts of this pack

Make the designs or one of them into a mosaic using the above techniques. Some DIY stores will give broken bathroom tiles away, though care should obviously be taken if children are handling them.

The following websites may be of interest:

<http://www.archaeology.co.uk/ca/timeline/roman/mosaics/mosaics.htm> gives the best and the worst in Britain!

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/romans/mosaics\\_gallery.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/romans/mosaics_gallery.shtml) is a good website for general mosaics.

<http://gwydir.demon.co.uk/jo/mosaic/index.htm> allows you to make a mosaic online and is great fun!



## A room fit for an Emperor!

If you have looked in detail at the wall paintings and mosaics you could ask pupils to draw the threads together by designing a Roman inspired room.

- What modern day images would be used on the floor and walls? Would there be footballing scenes on the walls instead of hunting? What would modern day scenes from family life be like?
- What would be on the floor - images of politicians or pop stars instead of figures from mythology? What symbols might be used?
- Roman tastes are quite bright and loud in comparison to today's fashion for neutral colours and plain walls. Do the floors and walls complement each other in this Roman room or do colours clash?
- Romans didn't have curtains at the windows, but the Roman inspired room could, along with other fabrics. What kind of symbolic motifs/ branding could be used? You could produce a sample of fabric by printing motifs on to fabric using potato printing.
- If you have space and time, paint life size designs for floor and walls on to wall paper and put them together to see how it looks in the classroom - invite pupils from other classes to act as art critics on the displays!

[http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ho/04/eust/ho\\_03.14.13a-g.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ho/04/eust/ho_03.14.13a-g.htm) gives a reconstruction of roman room with wall painting and mosaics.