

Where and when:

Date: Monday, 27 November 2023

Time: 11:00

Duration: 30 minutes

Location: bbc.co.uk/livelessons

This programme is available to view from home or school, and no sign-up is required.

Simply visit the website on the day and follow the instructions on the page to watch. Subtitles will also be available.



Curriculum links:

Ages 7 to 11: Key Stage 2 (England) / Key Stages 1 and 2 (Northern Ireland) / First and Second Level (Scotland) / Progression Steps 2 and 3 (Wales).

Pupils should:

- Ask historically valid questions about change, cause, similarity, difference and significance in the context of the Roman Empire and its impact on the British Isles.
- Sequence events and develop a chronologically secure knowledge and understanding of British, local and world history, noting connections, contrasts and trends.
- Consider places then and now and how our identity, way of life and culture have been shaped by influences from the wider world.
- Compare characteristics and aspects of past societies and distinctive features of daily life in the past.
- Make appropriate use of historical terms and historical evidence.
- Explore how the world around us has changed over time.

Setup:

This lesson can be viewed in the classroom or at home using a computer, tablet or mobile phone, or on the CBBC channel. This Live Lesson can be watched on the CBBC channel at 11:00 on Monday, 27 November 2023, or on the BBC Teach website. It will remain online afterwards to be used as a teaching resource whenever you need it.

We will be running a live commentary page on BBC Teach during the live broadcast to share contributions from children watching from home and school.

How much space and equipment is needed?

The lesson can be viewed in a classroom or at home with a device (computer, tablet or mobile phone) linked to a reliable broadband connection or watched on a television on the CBBC channel. We will ask children to get involved in activities throughout the lesson and have provided downloadable [activity sheets](#) to help guide them through this.

You may wish to hand these out in advance, along with stationery such as pens and pencils. Pupils will still be able to follow the activities if they don't have printed activity sheets to hand.

Lesson content:

This programme supports work around history. It is designed to engage primary learners from ages 7- 11. It covers learning objectives across:

- Key Stage 2 (England)
- Key stages 1 and 2 (Northern Ireland)
- First and second level (Scotland)
- Progression Steps 2 and 3 (Wales)

In this special lesson, children in classrooms across the UK will be transformed into history detectives as they follow clues to uncover the identities of people who once lived at the famous Roman fort of Vindolanda. They'll learn all about the important work archaeologists do and examine evidence to uncover the stories of people from the past.

Section 1- Introduction:

Ben Shires will kick off the lesson in search of archaeologist and co-presenter Raksha Dave. Along the way, he'll encounter a re-enactment actor dressed up as a Roman soldier.

The presenters will then introduce what it means to be an archaeologist and how we will use clues from the past to solve a history mystery at Vindolanda. The re-enactment soldier will introduce a challenge: using real evidence in the museum, the team must uncover the hidden identities of three people you might not expect to have lived at the Roman fort.

Section 2 – First mystery person:

This section begins with an explanation of the Roman world and what life might have been like for people in Vindolanda. The presenters will enlist the help of children as history detectives and Raksha will reveal a set of clues describing the first mystery person. As part of their investigation, the team will look at an authentic Roman writing tablet found at Vindolanda that was sent to a soldier. Using information from the tablet, the presenters will then ask the audience to think of a question they would want to ask a Roman soldier.

Download activity sheet 1 [here](#).

To help the team solve the first challenge, a video will play exploring the structure of the Roman army and different types of soldiers.

The presenters will then look at the difference between auxiliary and legionary soldiers. The history detectives then reveal some shields that they have found - one rounded and one rectangular. Using their new-found evidence, they will correctly guess that the first mystery person is an auxiliary soldier and unlock a message from a re-enactment actor.

Section 3 – Second mystery person:

The presenters and history detectives will then hear clues describing the second mystery person.

In order to explore who else might have lived at Vindolanda, Raskha will head to an excavation trench and talk to Penny, an archaeologist on the dig, to discover what artefacts she has found and how they might be able to help the team solve the history mystery.

Based on Raksha's discussion with Penny, Ben will head to Vindolanda's shoe gallery to explore what kinds of people may have worn them. He will then ask the audience to examine three of the shoes in the gallery and write down which one they think was the most expensive and who they think it might have belonged to.

Download activity sheet 2 [here](#).

Using evidence from Vindolanda, including Lepidina's slipper in the shoe gallery and a Roman birthday invitation, the team will correctly identify the second mystery person as a rich Roman woman. This will unlock another special message from a re-enactment actor.

Section 4 – Third mystery person:

For their third and final mystery person, the team will be asked to look around the museum for a small wooden sword. After finding the correct artefact, the audience will then be asked to write down who they think it might have belonged to.

Download activity sheet 3 [here](#).

The team of history detectives will correctly guess that the wooden sword is a toy and would have belonged to a Roman child. This will then unlock their third and final mystery person and re-enactment message. The presenters will thank their re-enactment friends, history detectives and everyone watching and, as a reward, celebrate in style with a Roman birthday party.

Useful links:

- [Vindolanda - classroom resources](#)
- [BBC Teach: The Romans](#)
- [BBC Teach: What did the Romans do for us?](#)
- [BBC Bitesize: What was life like in the Roman army](#)
- [BBC Bitesize: When did the Romans first invade Scotland?](#)
- [BBC Bitesize: Life in a Roman Fort](#)

Follow-up activities:

Letter home

Ask students to write a 'letter home' in reply to the message on the writing tablet they saw in the Live Lesson. They might do some research to choose suitable names for the person they imagine writing the letter and for that person's family. What news might the letter-writer give? What questions might they ask?

Artefact slideshow

Students could curate a computer slideshow using images from a range of sources to show the kinds of possessions a particular person from Vindolanda might have. So perhaps, as well as Lepidina's slipper, they might also find Roman designs for her mirror, comb or drinking cup. Students could source these images from books or websites and add their own sketches or digital photographs to their slideshows. Encourage them to include captions explaining what their finds show.

Roman story-time

Ask students to collect examples of children's stories set in the Roman world. This activity works well for students working in pairs and would suit a visit to the school, or local library. Children might choose books such as 'The Eagle of the Ninth' by Rosemary Sutcliff for example, or titles from the 'Roman Mysteries' series by Caroline Lawrence.

Pupils could prepare short readings from their chosen books to share with the class. Ask them to choose a section that illustrates the way of life of people living in Roman times, or that mentions artefacts similar to the ones they have seen in the Live Lesson or in their own research.

Students may enjoy drawing their own illustrations for the story extracts they have chosen. Encourage them to check with historical sources to make sure their illustrations are accurate.

Mosaic making

Starting from a photograph on a news report such as the one below (from BBC News in 2022), ask students to copy and complete, using crayons on squared paper, a detail from a Roman mosaic re-discovered by archaeologists.

[BBC News: London's largest mosaic find for 50 years uncovered](#)

Students might go on to make mosaic designs of their own based on Roman mosaic fragments they can find pictured online or in information books.