







Romans Box

Contents list, teacher's notes and activity ideas

Contents

- Object 1  Piece of patterned tile
- Object 2  Piece of patterned greyware pot
- Object 3  Piece of terracotta pot
- Object 4  Partial roof tile with paw print
- Object 5  Tessera tile
- Object 6  Replica hygiene objects

Object 7  x3 Roman coins

Object 8  Replica oil lamp

Picture A  Diagram of Roman hypocaust

Picture B  Example of a box flue tile

Picture C  Picture D 
Mosaic floors in Lullingstone Roman villa

Picture E  Gold snake finger ring
© Kent County Council Sevenoaks Museum

 x8 tubs of Play-Doh  Tub of mosaic tiles

 x4 rollers  x4 forks

Teaching notes and activities

The first Roman commander to set foot in Britain was Julius Caesar, who landed in Kent in 55BC. Our island became part of the Roman empire after the invasion of AD43.



Object 1, Picture A, Picture B

The Romans made many things out of clay. Whilst the Ancient Greeks painted their pottery, Romans preferred to decorate their pottery by engraving.

Object 1 is a fragment of a box flue tile.

A box flue was part of the Roman hypocaust system, an early type of central heating. **Picture A** shows how this heating system worked. **Picture B** is an example of a complete box flue tile. The hollow box flue tiles carried hot air through them, keeping the room warm.

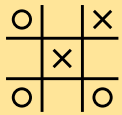


Object 2, Object 3

Q: Can you guess what these pieces were part of?

A: The grey sherd is curved, and the other sherd has a rim on it, which shows us that both objects were part of a pot, bowl or vase.

The Romans used pottery for all sorts of other things, such as water pipes and toilet pots!



Engraving patterns in clay

Take it in turns to try out different patterns using the Play-Doh and tools provided. Work on a clean table or desk.



Flatten the 'clay' with your hand



Use the tools to create a pattern



Squish it up and start again



Try a different technique



Object 4

This is a piece of Roman roof tile.

Q: Can you notice anything unusual about it?

A: Paw print.

How did it get there?

The tile is made from clay. Clay is a type of soil which can be moulded when wet but becomes hard when dried. Romans would leave newly made tiles out to dry in the sun, and sometimes cats or dogs would walk over them.

Both wild and domesticated cats lived in Roman Britain. Wild cats already lived here before the Roman invasion, but the Romans brought domesticated cats here. Animals were not just pets like we have today. Cats could be used to catch mice and rats, and dogs could guard homes from thieves.

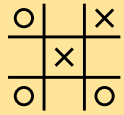


Object 5, Picture C, Picture D

This tiny tile is called a tessera. Tesserae were used to make mosaic floors in wealthy Roman houses, each design using thousands of pieces.

The pictures show mosaic designs on the floor of Lullingstone Roman villa, one of several Roman settlements along the River Darent near Sevenoaks.

Mosaic designs captured scenes from myths, history or everyday life. We can learn a lot about the Romans from them.



Design your own mosaic

Share out the mosaic tiles from the tub.

Work in pairs to arrange a mosaic design on your desk or table using the pieces provided. It could be an animal or an object you like, or an abstract pattern.



To save your design, get your teacher to take a photo before you put the pieces back for the next group of pupils to use.



Object 6

Q: What do you think these objects were used for?

A: Personal hygiene

The larger object is a replica strigil. Strigils were cleaning instruments used to scrape oil, sweat and dirt from the skin after bathing or exercise.

The chatelaine of smaller objects is also a replica. Small items like this were used to scoop out ear wax, clean under fingernails etc.



Object 7

These are Roman coins made of bronze. Notice the different degrees of wear on the coins, one is almost completely unrecognisable. How worn a coin is depends on how much it was handled/ how long it was in circulation before getting lost. The environment the coin has been in and the material it is made of will also affect how worn it is. Some gold coins come out of the ground after centuries looking brand new!



Picture E is a Roman finger ring made of gold. Snake designs were common in Roman jewellery. In Roman mythology, snakes represented positive things like rebirth, good fortune, healing and protection.

This ring is on display in Sevenoaks Museum.



Object 8 is a copy of a Roman oil lamp, featuring an image of a charioteer. Lamps like this were filled with oil and lit like a candle. The design is based on an original which dates to around 40-70 AD.