

Dress like a Roman

Roman men, women and children wore different clothes than we do today. The type of clothes they wore showed everyone how rich or poor they were.

Romans loved fine clothing and fine material such as linen. However, with Britain being one of the cooler and wetter parts of the Empire, the woollen clothing tended to be thicker and warmer.

A toga was generally worn by men who were Roman Citizens on special occasions or official meetings. A toga was a long piece of white material and was often a semi-circle shape.

The emperor wore a spectacular purple toga, but this would have been extremely expensive to make. Senators wore a white toga with purple edging.

Some togas were 5.5m long and 2.75m wide! This is only a bit shorter than three men lying down one after the other.

Men who were not citizens or slaves wore a plain tunic. This would have been made from wool or sometimes linen.



A man wearing a senator's toga, and a woman wearing a long *stola*

Women wore a long tunic which was often ankle length. This was covered by a *stola* (a bit like a dress) which was fastened at the shoulder with a brooch. Over this they may have worn a *palla*, which was a large piece of rectangular material which was worn as a coat.

Rich women would have had elaborate hairstyles secured by hairpins and worn lots of jewellery.



Hairpin made from animal bone

Children wore a knee length tunic which was tied around the waist with a leather belt, because of not this might signify you were a slave.

Male children of rich families may wear a charm around their neck called a bulla. They were given these when they were babies.

Roman sandals were made from leather and tied with leather laces. They were designed to allow air to circulate, so that your feet didn't get too hot and sweaty. They could be adjusted for size.

The soldiers' sandals had hobnails to keep the inner and outer parts of the sandal together. These made them strong and were noisy and scary to their enemies when marching. The type of sandals the soldiers wore went out of fashion shortly after the conquest of Britain. You can find out more with some great pictures from the [Museum of London](#) website.

When it was cold, the Romans added wool socks to keep their feet warm.



People still wear sandals similar to Roman sandals today

Create your own toga or tunic

Become a Roman Citizen for the day and make your own toga or tunic. You will need an assistant for this.

- ▶ Find a flat bedsheet, tablecloth or any large piece of material
- ▶ Stand with your arms up. Place the whole toga over your left shoulder letting a third of the material drape down your front towards the floor, and two thirds dangling down at the back
- ▶ Ask your assistant to wrap the back two thirds of the sheet around you a once from back to front, and then throw the last part of the sheet over your left shoulder. Leaving the right shoulder bare.
- ▶ If you get really stuck why not look for a video to show you how on the internet

How do you think a Roman Citizen would have felt wearing their toga?

- ▶ To make a child's tunic borrow an adult sized t-shirt. If it has a design on it, you could always wear it inside out. Tunics would have come in lots of different colours, but popular colours were red, brown and green
- ▶ Use a plain leather belt or use a piece of string to wrap around your waist. You could also add a large woolly scarf as a cloak to keep you warm.

Do you think you would be cool in the hot weather and warm in the winter?



Create your own toga or tunic using a sheet, tablecloth or t-shirt.
Photographs by S Creek.

Make your own Roman Brooch

This is a picture of some Roman brooches that were found by archaeologists in Exeter. They are made from copper alloy and coloured enamel. They would have looked bright and shiny when they were first made. Both men and women would have worn brooches.



Roman Brooches found in Exeter, from RAMM's collection.

- To make your own Roman Brooch, find some natural materials when you are next outside. For example, an interesting flat stone, a piece of wood or bark, a tiny twig, a shell. One of these will be the main part of your brooch but you could layer up with smaller objects to make it look more decorative
- Take a strip of thick card about 10cm long and fold it in half
- Wind an elastic band around your natural objects and slide one half of your piece of card into the back. This makes your card into a sort of peg to attach to your clothes.



Homemade Roman Brooches, and how to 'peg' it to your toga or tunic
by S Creek

Don't forget to take a photo of your Roman clothing and jewellery to show your teacher.