

How To Make A Roman Shield (*Scutum*)

Roman shields were made of sheets of wood covered in leather. Pictures show that the leather was often coloured. The shields were quite large so they could protect large areas of your body, although the Romans often used their shield in formation such as the tortoise, to protect a large group of soldiers, not just an individual.

Roman shields could have many designs which usually related to certain Gods e.g.; Trident for Neptune, lightning bolts for Jupiter. Other symbols which could be found on roman shields were; the Sun, wheat, spears, lions, wings, laurel wreaths or even a crescent moon.

At the centre of the shield was the *boss*- a large part that stuck out, sometimes sharp! A classic Roman attack is to thump the enemy with the boss of your shield and then finish him off with your *gladius* (sword).

On either side of the *boss* (centre piece) are the *tabula*. This is where you can write the motto of your legion or something else to identify you in battle. The one in the pictures says SPQR – Senatorum Populaque Romanum - it means “For the Senate and People of Rome” and is the motto of the Roman republic.

If you want to find out more about the Romans in Scotland then you could have a look at this story on our collections website.

<https://www.culturenlmuseums.co.uk/story/romans-in-scotland/>



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Roman Shield Instructions

You will need:

A large piece of cardboard

Large sheets of paper/ brown paper/Wrapping paper (or paint)

Scissors

Tape

Glue

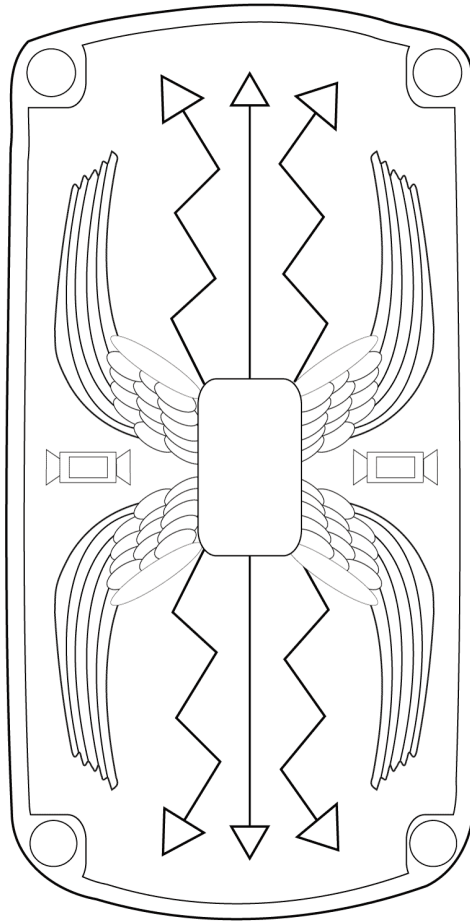
Silver foil, pens, paint, coloured paper, or similar for decoration

- Get a big bit of cardboard for your shield.
- Cover it in the coloured paper, or paint it with a base colour. (If you are using paint you will need to wait for the paint to dry before adding any decoration)
- Trim the edges of your shield with silver foil. (Roman shields were finished off with brass or soft iron trim. Mainly for decoration but would have also prevented the leather from fraying.)
- Cut a long strip of cardboard and tape it to the back of your shield to make a handle
- Now you are ready to decorate your shield, by cutting out shapes to glue on, or using paint or marker pens. There are some images of shields and patterns below to give you some ideas, but you can you your own design too.

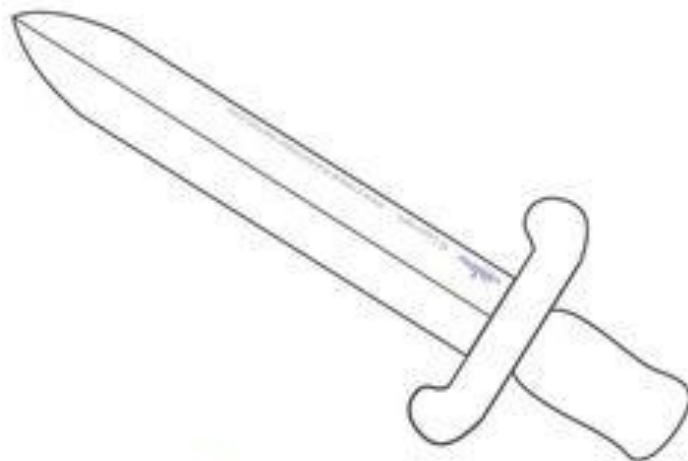
We would love to see your finished shields, feel free to post a picture on our twitter account @CNLlearning



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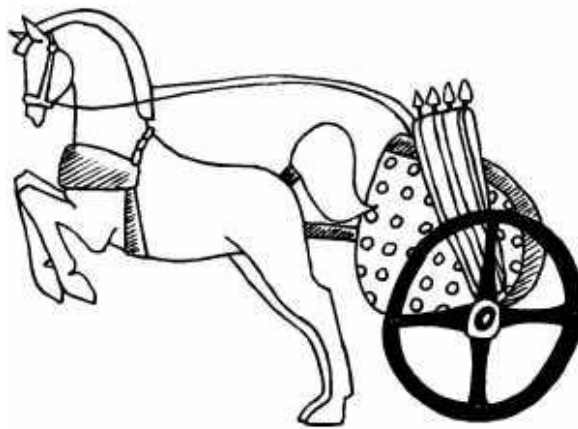
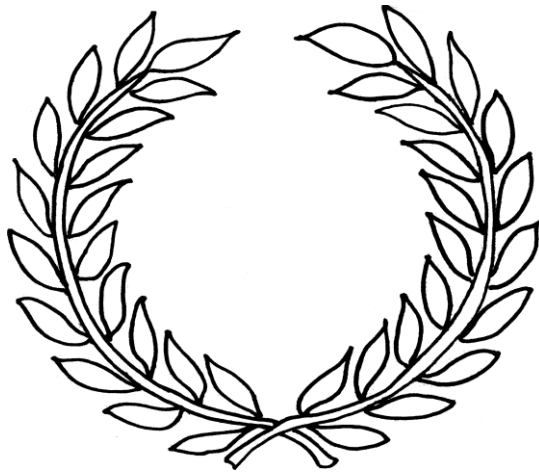
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