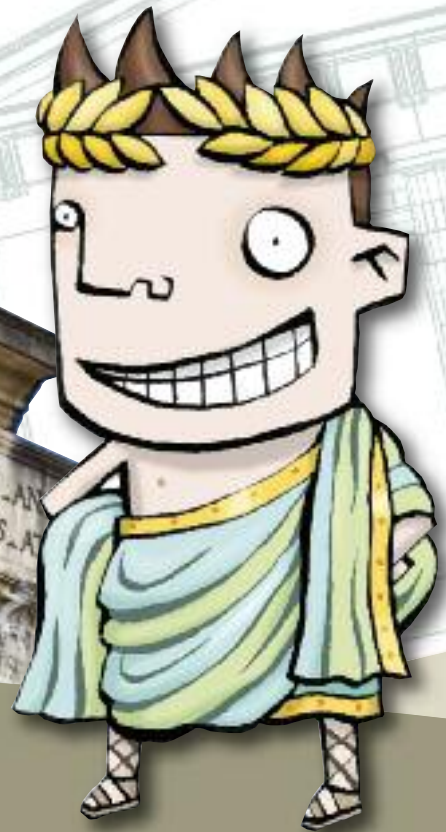


Activity **2** make a model Roman Villa

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THE ROMANS

# Make a model Roman villa with under-floor heating!



## Activity 2



This activity is great for an extended holiday project for children or the whole family. You can each take responsibility for different sections of the villa. Why not complete this before or after visiting one of the fantastic Roman sites across the UK. You can find details of Roman and other historic sites to visit near you online:

[www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)  
[www.historic-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk)  
[www.cadw.wales.gov.uk](http://www.cadw.wales.gov.uk)  
[www.doeni.gov.uk/niea](http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea)

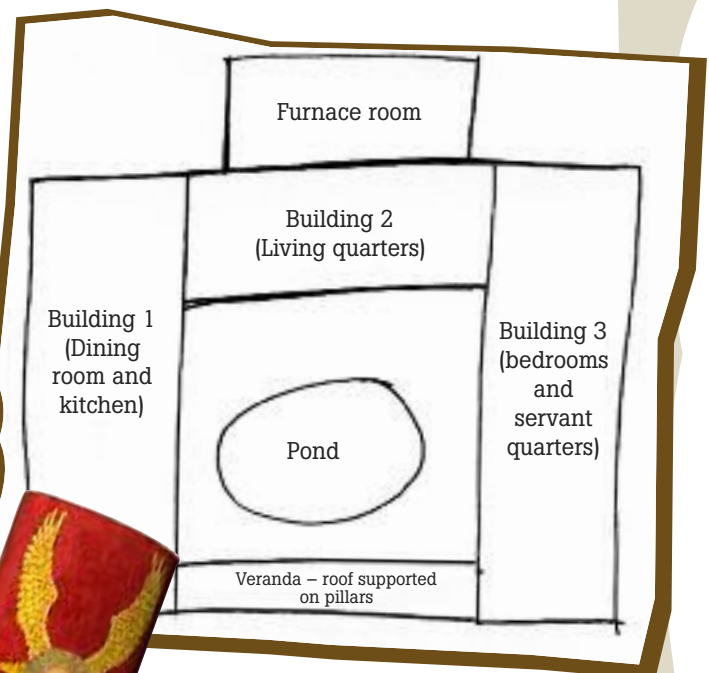


The richest Romans lived in fine houses which we know as 'villas'. Just like today, the owners liked to make their houses look special, building them to fit their needs and to show off their wealth.

Use our simple floor plan and illustration as the basis for your villa. But remember that you can vary the design depending on what sized boxes you have and to make the villa your own, just like the Romans did.

### You will need:

- Scissors, glue and sticky tape
- Strong base of thick card
- Newspaper/scrap paper to cover the table
- 3 x large rectangular packaging boxes (large cereal boxes work well)
- 1 x smaller square packaging box (a small tissue box works well)
- Sheets of card or thick paper
- Toilet rolls
- Paints and/or pens to decorate
- Silver foil
- Coloured foil sweet wrappers (optional)
- Empty egg carton (optional)



## Activity **2** Make a model Roman villa

### 1. Build your villa

#### i. Prepare your buildings

Take your four boxes and lay them out on your base using the plan on page 2. Check you are happy with the height of each 'building'. You can make the cereal boxes into shorter buildings by carefully cutting to size – this can be easier if you flatten each box first, then reform using sticky tape to secure.



Romans usually made their walls out of stone and covered them with cement to make the walls smooth and very strong. Create the Roman look by covering each of the sides of your boxes with cream-coloured paper. You can paint white paper cream by mixing white paint with a dash of yellow.





## Activity 2 Make a model Roman villa

### ii. Make the roofs

Roofs were made from red clay tiles, much like our roofs today. First create the sloping roofs out of card. To make the card the right shape, cut strips that are just a little longer than each box and twice as wide.

Either paint each roof a red, rusty colour to represent tiles, or stick on small squares of red painted paper in layers to create a tile effect.

Fold the strips of card in half and place on top of each box to create a sloping roof. Secure in place with sticky tape on the inside of the roof. Fill in the triangular gap at either end of the roof with a piece of cream-coloured paper.

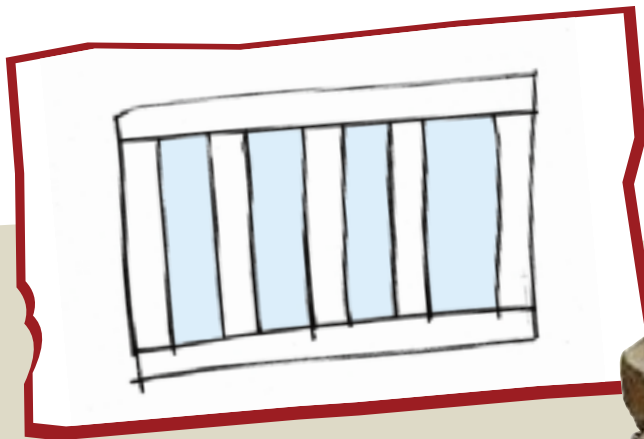


### iii. Add the details

Stand your four buildings in place on the base following our floor plan. Before you stick them down, mark out where you would like to have the windows and doors.

Windows would have been rectangular in shape with wooden frames and light green or blue glass. Doors were made from wooden boards, with two supporting planks added horizontally for extra strength. Draw or paint the windows and doors on the walls using a black pen to add detail.

Now your buildings are ready, stick them to the main base. This should leave a large space in the middle of your buildings which will be your courtyard.



## Activity **2** Make a model Roman villa

### 2. Create your Courtyard: (Roman word: *peristyle*)

#### i. Make the basics

Add a pond to your courtyard using a sheet of silver foil cut into an oval or circle. Give the look of grass around your pond by painting the remaining parts of your base green or using some green paper.

#### ii. Some extra touches

You can add your own details, for example:

- A Plant – Make a pot by painting a section of an egg box brown, then ball up some green paper to create a bush. You can paint on flowers too.
- A bench – use half the lid of an egg box painted grey to create a stone bench.
- For an extra special villa, add a mosaic floor. You'll find all the instructions for making a Roman mosaic in the 'Make a marvellous mosaic' pack which is free to download on the Hands on History website.



## Activity 2 Make a model Roman villa

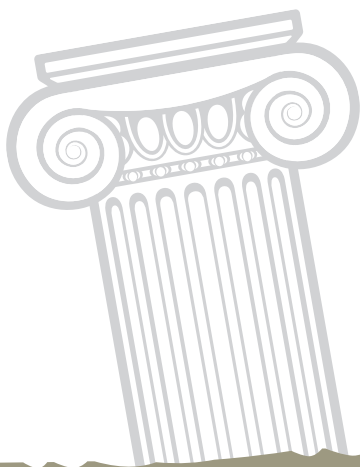
### iii. The veranda

At the front of your villa create a grand entrance with an open veranda held up with pillars. How many pillars you will need will depend on the size of your villa, but you'll probably want around four to six, divided on either side of a wider opening. You can make these from toilet or kitchen roll tubes or by rolling a piece of card into a tube and securing with sticky tape. The pillars should be a couple of centimetres shorter than buildings 1 and 3. Paint your pillars brown to look like wood.



Use tabs of sticky tape to secure your columns to the base of your villa in a straight row running between buildings 1 and 3.

To make the roof of the veranda, cut a piece of card long enough to fit between your two main buildings and around 6cm wide. Decorate with 'tiles' to match the roofs of the other buildings. Fold a tab (around 1cm wide) along the back of the roof so that it sits neatly on top of the pillars. Secure at a sloping angle and attach to the two long buildings on either side using sticky tape.



### Top tips

Paint all your roofs first and leave to dry while you create the rest of your villa.

If using toilet or kitchen roll tubes to make your pillars, you can make these thinner if required, by cutting a straight line up the tube, twisting it around tightly and securing with sticky tape.

If you're feeling really creative you can add murals on the inside walls of your courtyard.



## Activity **2** Make a model Roman villa

### **3. Add under-floor heating** (Roman word: *hypocaust*)

#### **i. Raise up your villa**

Many Roman villas had under-floor heating which would have been especially useful in the British winter! The Roman name, hypocaust, is Ancient Greek meaning 'fire beneath'.

The floor was supported on short columns made of stacked tiles. A fire would be kept burning (very hard work for the slaves!) in the furnace room, and the hot air would move through the under-floor area, heating the rooms above. The hot air and smoke escaped through channels in the walls.

To make your hypocaust system, you will need to raise up your whole villa by around 6cm. Create two piles of three or four books underneath buildings 1 and 3 and place the base of your villa on top. This will leave a narrow channel beneath the villa for the air to flow through.

#### **ii. Build a furnace**

To represent the furnace, cut small pieces of silver foil or coloured foil or sweet wrappers into the shape of flames and add details using yellow and red paper. Stick them to a piece of card using sticky tape along one edge only so that it stands up.



[bbc.co.uk/history](http://bbc.co.uk/history)

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## Activity 2 Make a model Roman villa

### iii. 'Heat' your villa

Place your furnace flames under the square furnace room and blow hard behind it. The flames will flicker. Place your hand at the other end of your villa and you should feel the draught that's running under the building and out the other side, just as the warm air would have circulated through a Roman hypocaust system.



### For groups and schools:

You can split a large group into small teams each responsible for one aspect of the villa – the buildings, the roofs, the courtyard.

To extend the activity, include cut-away rooms showing internal details such as mosaics and wall paintings.

You can spread this activity over more than one session by making all the parts in session one and building in session two. Further sessions could include making mosaic floor (using the Make a Marvellous Mosaic pack) or making mini Romans to live in the villa – you can use Eric for inspiration.

Visiting a Roman site can be a great way to inspire your group. Some sites even offer free or discounted re-booked visits for learning groups. Find out more on our partner websites listed on page 2 of this pack.

