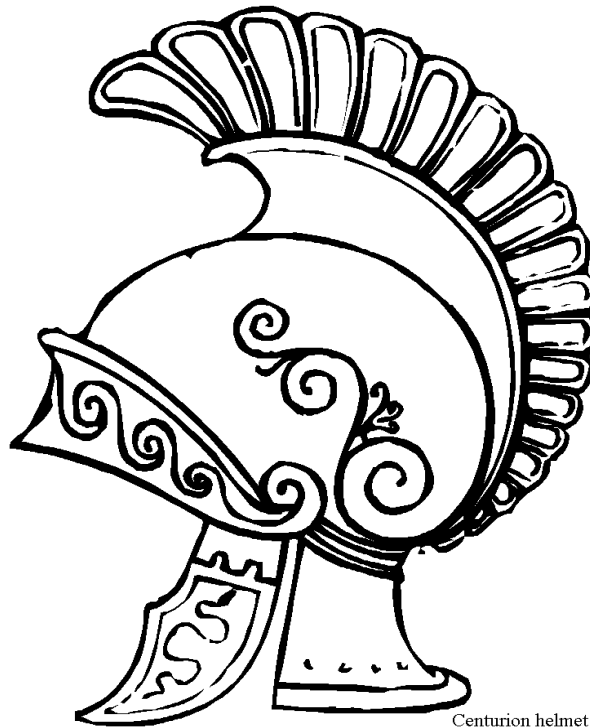


Roman Britain

43 AD to 410 AD



Centurion helmet

**Including Information on
Julius Caesar**

For Early Learners

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CAESAR - GENERAL, POLITICIAN, STATESMAN

Julius Caesar is no doubt the most famous Roman of them all! He conquered Gaul in a brilliant campaign which is still used in studies for training generals today. His victories in Gaul (now known as France) brought into the empire what should later become one of the most important new territories to the empire. The conquest of Gaul also brought the border of the empire to the river Rhine, where it should remain for centuries to come. He also led expeditions into Germany and Britain, which were at that time completely unknown to Romans. But his political enemies never stopped plotting against him and tried to take away his power. Caesar famously crossed the river Rubicon (which was the border between the province he ruled and the Italian territories of the Roman empire) and took power over Rome as a dictator. When away in Egypt he fell in love with the legendary Egyptian queen Cleopatra (Cleopatra was actually Greek). Julius Caesar also reformed the calendar. With only minor changes his is the calendar we use today. One month, July, is named in his honour.



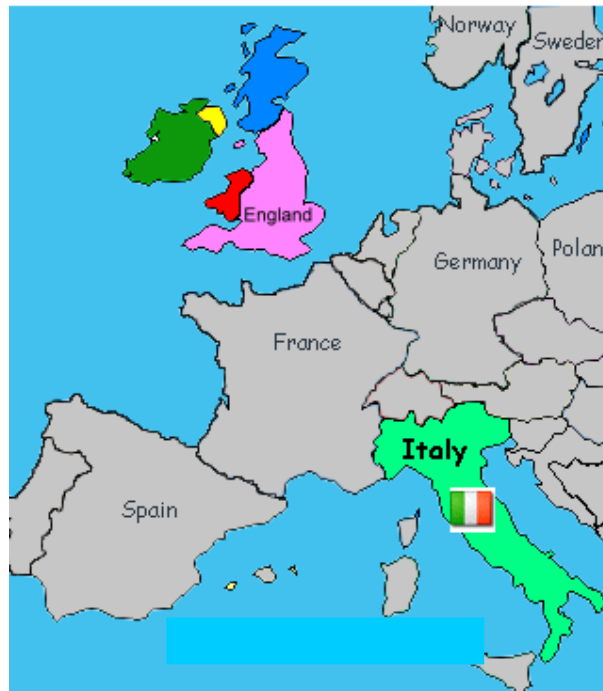
Roman Britain

43 AD to 410 AD

The Romans went to Britain nearly 2000 years ago and changed that country. Even today, the ruins of Roman buildings, forts, roads, and baths can be found all over Britain. The Romans invaded other countries too. The Roman Empire covered much of Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East.

Who were the Romans?

The Romans lived in Rome, a city in the centre of the country of Italy.



One day, some years before Jesus Christ was born, the Romans came to Britain.

Who founded Rome?

According to the Roman legend, Romulus was the founder of Rome. Romulus and his twin brother Remus were the sons of the God Mars. When they were very young they

were abandoned by the banks of the River Tiber and left to fend for themselves. Luckily for them they were found by a she-wolf who took pity on them fed them with her milk. The boys were later found by a shepherd who raised them. The boys grew up to be very strong and clever and they decided to build a town on the spot where the Shepherd had found them. They named their town Rome.

Julius Caesar

In 60 B.C. a young and ambitious general by the name of Julius Caesar stepped into political life. Caesar had been very successful on the battlefield, and had greatly expanded Rome's borders.



The senate feared that Caesar would use his army to overthrow the republican government. In an attempt to protect this from happening, the senate ordered Julius Caesar to return to Rome, but to leave his armies North of the Rubicon River.

Julius Caesar refused to do as he had been ordered. By crossing the Rubicon with his armies, he committed treason against the senate, and in effect declared civil war. Caesar eventually defeated opposing forces, and by 45 B.C. had taken over control of the entire Roman Empire. Caesar had himself declared dictator for life, giving him absolute power over the empire. He then proceeded to reform the nation, giving jobs and land to the poor.

Caesar's rule in Rome would be brief. The following year, in 44 B.C. Julius Caesar was murdered by members of the senate, lead by Marcus Brutus and Gaius Cassius, who were worried that Caesar was destroying the republic.

When did the Romans invade Britain?

First invasion - Caesar's first raid

In August 55 B.C. (55 years before Jesus was born) the Roman general, **Emperor Julius Caesar** invaded Britain. He took with him two Roman legions. After winning several battles against the Celtic tribes (Britons) in south-east England he returned to France.

Second invasion - Caesar's second raid

The following summer (in 54 B.C.) Caesar came to Britain again landing at Walmer near Deal in Kent. This time he brought with him no fewer than five legions (30,000 foot soldiers) and 2,000 cavalrymen (horse riders). This time the Romans crossed the River Thames. After more fighting, the British tribes promised to pay tribute to Rome and were then left in peace for nearly a century.

Third and final invasion

Nearly one hundred years later, in 43 A.D. (43 years after Jesus was born), **Emperor Claudius** organised the final and successful Roman invasion of Britain. General Aulus Plautius led four legions with 25,000 men, plus an equal number of auxiliary soldiers. They crossed the Channel in three divisions, landing at Richborough, Dover, and Lympe.

The biggest battle was fought on the banks of the River Medway, close to Rochester. It went on for two days before the Celtic tribes retreated.

Many tribes tried to resist the Romans. It took about four years for the invaders to finally gain control over southern England, and another 30 years for them to conquer all of the West Country and the mountains and valleys of Wales. The battle for Yorkshire and the remainder of northern England was still underway in AD 70.

Why did the Romans invade Britain?

Why the Romans came to Britain is not quite certain. Two reasons have been suggested:

1. The Romans were cross with Britain for helping the Gauls (now called the French) fight against the Roman general Julius Caesar.
2. They came to Britain looking for riches - land, slaves, and most of all, iron, lead, zinc, copper, silver and gold.
- 3.

How long did the Romans stay in Britain?

The Romans remained in Britain from 43 AD to 410 AD. That is almost four hundred years (four centuries).

Why did the Romans leave Britain?

Their homes in Italy were being attacked by fierce tribes and every soldier was needed.

What did the Romans call London?

The Romans called London '**Londinium**'.

The River Thames was quick way to transport goods between Britain and the Continent. The Romans saw this and built the town of Londinium around the river's main crossing point.

Why was the Roman Empire important?

The Romans, even today, play an important part in our lives. Many of the things we do or have originated from the Romans.

The Romans gave us:

- **Language**
The language we used today was developed from the Romans. The Romans spoke and wrote in Latin and many of our words are based on Latin words.
- **The Calendar**
Did you know that the calendar we use today is more than 2,000 years old? It was started by Julius Caesar, a Roman ruler. It is based on the movement of the earth around the sun, and so is called the 'solar calendar.' The solar calendar has 365 days a year, and 366 days every leap year, or every fourth year. The names of our months are taken from the names of Roman gods and rulers. The month 'July,' in fact, is named after Julius Caesar himself!
- **Laws and a legal system**
The laws and ways we determine what to do with someone who is accused of breaking a law came originally from the Roman Empire.
- **The Census**
The Roman Empire was huge and included millions of people living over a large area. How did they keep track of all these people? Easy! They counted them! The Roman Empire began the practice of taking a census, or a 'count,' of all the people within its boundaries every so often. Today, many countries like ours take a census every 10 years.

The Triumvirate

After the death of Julius Caesar, the Roman Empire was divided up and ruled by three of Caesar's former generals. These generals were Octavian, Marc Antony, and Marcus Lepidus. These three leaders formed what they called the Triumvirate. Each member of the triumvirate had absolute authority over matters that took place within their portion of the empire.

This triumvirate did not last long. Octavian forced Lepidus to retire from public life. Octavian then began planning a civil war against Marc Antony. Antony fell in love with, and married a princess from Egypt by the name of Cleopatra. Octavian convinced the people that Marc Antony intended to take over Rome, and put Egyptian rulers in charge of affairs in the Roman Government. Octavian declared war against Antony in the name of the Roman Republic. By 31 B.C. Octavian defeated Marc Antony in Greece. In order to evade capture, Marc Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide.



Octavian was now the undisputed ruler of Rome. The republican government, which had been designed to rule a small city-state, and had not been very effective at ruling the now massive Roman Empire. Rather than reform the republican form of government that they practiced, Octavian recommended to the senate that one strong leader be put in place. The senate elected Octavian as the consul, and supreme leader of Rome for life.

The Romans also gave us:

- **straight roads**
- **central heating**
- **concrete**
- **aqueducts (bridges for water)**

DID YOU KNOW?

- In Ancient Rome, only boys went to school. The girls stayed at home.
- Spartacus was an escaped Roman slave who led an army of 90,000 escaped slaves against the might of the Romans.
- After his death, the Roman emperor Nero was reportedly sighted by Roman citizens from time to time. This made him the Elvis of the ancient world.
- All Roman citizens were required to serve in the military when needed. This insured a constantly available supply of soldiers.
- The first calendar was created by the Egyptians.
- Cleopatra wasn't Egyptian, she was Greek.
- After the death of Julius Caesar, the Roman Empire was divided up and ruled by three of Caesar's former generals. These generals were Octavian, Marc Antony, and Marcus Lepidus.
- After being elected as consul for life, Octavian changed his name to Augustus, which means 'Majestic One'.

For more information and sources please visit the following websites:

<http://www.roman-empire.net/children/famous.html>

www.gutenberg.org

www.wikipedia.org

www.ancienthistory.about.com