

Reading - Unit 3 - Monday WEEK 13

Roman Soldiers

Roman Armour and Weapons

We know about Roman armour and weapons from Roman pictures and statues, and from finds by modern archaeologists.

A Roman soldier wore armour made from strips of iron and leather (lorica segmentata in Latin). On his head was a metal helmet (galea). He carried a rectangular shield, curved so it protected his body (scutum). The shield was made of wood and leather.

The soldier's main weapons were a short sword for stabbing (gladius) and a long spear called a javelin for throwing (pilum). The javelin had a sharp iron point, and a thin, bendy shaft. When it hit an enemy's shield, the point stuck in, but the shaft bent. This made it difficult to pull out. The long spear shaft

got in the way, so the enemy had to throw away his shield.

Roman soldiers kept fit by running, marching and practice-fighting. They could march 20 miles/30 km a day wearing armour. They could swim or cross rivers in boats, build bridges, and smash their way into forts. Each man carried his weapons and shield, some food and camping equipment (such as spare clothes, cooking pot and an axe or spade).

Roman soldiers almost always obeyed orders. They usually fought in lines, marching forward with their shields facing the enemy. If they were being fired at from above (with arrows or rocks) the men would lift their shields over their heads for protection. They looked like a tortoise, so they called this formation the testudo (Latin for tortoise).

Questions

1. Name two materials used to make Roman armour.
2. What is a testudo ?
3. Match up these Latin words with the correct meaning:

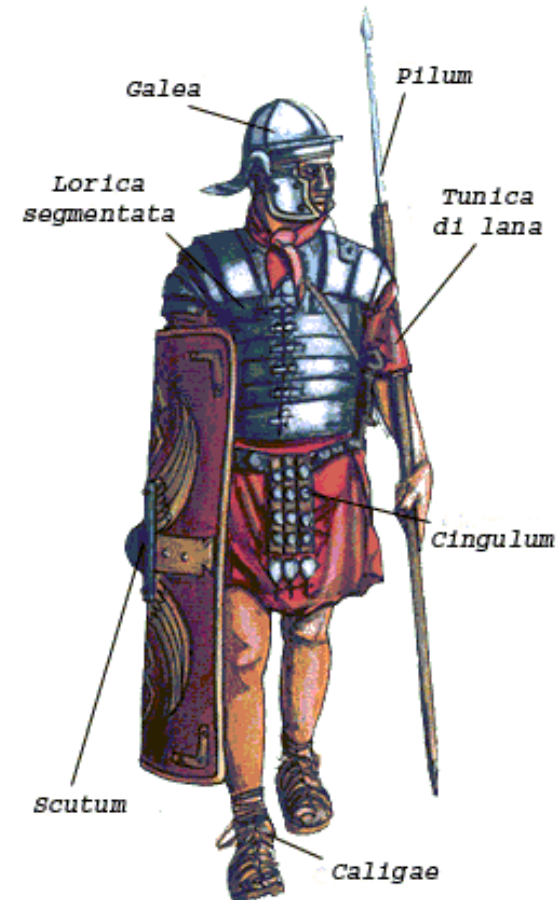
scutum javelin

galea short sword

gladius helmet

pilum shield

4. How far could a Roman soldier walk in a day?
5. How did they keep fit?
6. What kind of shaft did a pilum have?
7. Why was it like this?
8. What is the Latin word for sandals ?



9. Why was a Roman shield curved?

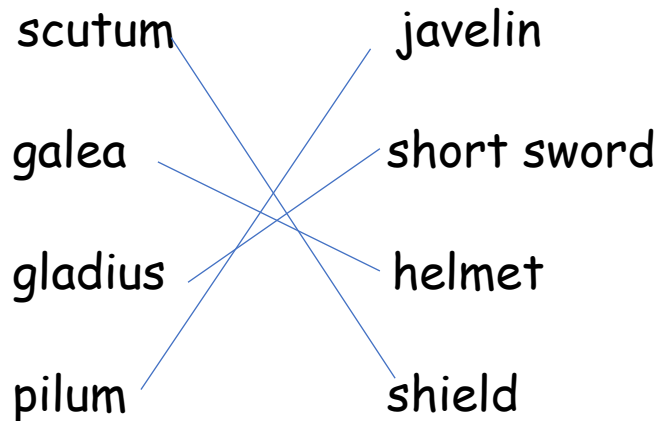
10. In what formation did the soldiers fight?

Answers

1. Name two materials used to make Roman armour. **Iron & leather**

2. What is a testudo ? **A formation of soldiers like a tortoise**

3. Match up these Latin words with the correct meaning:



4. How far could a Roman soldier walk in a day? **20 m / 30km**

5. How did they keep fit? **running, marching and practice-fighting**

6. What kind of shaft did a pilum have? **thin & bendy**

7. Why was it like this? **So that the point would stick in to an enemy's shield but would be**

difficult to pull out so it became a hinderance.

8. What is the Latin word for sandals ? **caligae**
9. Why was a Roman shield curved? **To protect the body**
10. In what formation did the soldiers fight? **In lines**