

Teaching notes on 3.01a Mosaics

Slide 1

Learning objective: To make our own Roman mosaic of our name.

Mouse-click on this slide will also make Lucundus say 'salvete!' ('sal-way-tay') to the class. This means 'hello!' The pupils can reply by saying 'salve!' ('sal-way'). 'Salve' is the greeting used to one person and 'salvete' is a greeting to more than one.

A further mouse-click makes Lucundus ask, "quid agistis?" (how are you?) (n.b. the -tis on the end of agistis shows us that he's asking all of us. If he was just asking one person, it would be, "quid agis?") Mouse-clicks model two replies, one for if the pupil is feeling 'bene' (well) and one for if the pupil is doing 'male' (badly). These replies are adverbs, which we'll be looking at in this unit.

Slide 2

If we look down at the floor in many public and private spaces, we can see patterns made in stone or ceramic. On mouse-click, Lucundus will appear to tell us all that this practical art form of mosaic was invented by the Romans, as shown here in this beautifully-preserved Roman mosaic floor mid-excavation.



Can the students recall where they may have seen mosaics themselves? Perhaps your school has one or has a patterned, tiled floor. Just like in Roman times, stone is a good material for flooring as it's very hard-wearing. Arranging it into decorative patterns also makes it beautiful to look at, and if in Roman times you had a really fancy mosaic floor, it showed that you had wealth and status. Mosaics are made by pressing coloured stones or tiles into mortar, which sets around them

Slide 3

Here are some examples of Roman mosaics. Commonly depicted were animals or famous heroes or gods. They often featured beautiful borders and patterns.

Slide 4

This slide gives a close-up of the tiger mosaic. What are the little tiles called that make up a mosaic? [tesserae, displayed on mouse-click]. This comes from the Greek word 'tessares' meaning 'four' and gives us the English words 'tessellation' and 'tetrahedron' (and 'tesseract' for any Marvel universe fans!).

Slides 5-8



The next four slides run through the process of making the paper mosaic.

Step 1: sketch out your name (or initial, if your name is long or if time is short). Encourage the pupils to make their name bold and block-lettered, as in the picture, and take up the majority of the paper. Use a dark colour paper (e.g. grey, brown) as the base for the mosaic, as this will look more like grout.

Step 2: choose your colours and cut out your tesserae. About 1cm squares are good, although they'll need chopping down for corners etc. Coloured sugar paper is perfect, although paint colour cards (which you can get from Homebase and other DIY stores) also work well.

Step 3: stick down your tesserae, remembering to leave a slight gap between them. Use contrasting colours to define edges. You may need to chop tesserae in half to fill smaller spaces.

Step 4: The finished article. These paper mosaics make a beautiful classroom display:



Slide 9

The plenary which takes the form of a set of questions:

Question 1 Why did the Romans use mosaics on their floors? [because stones are hard-wearing, mosaics are beautiful to look at, fancy mosaics are a display of wealth and status]

Question 2 What sort of objects or designs might you see in a Roman mosaic? [Gods, heroes, patterns, animals]

Question 3 What is the Latin name for the little pieces that make up a mosaic? [tesserae]

On mouse-click, lucundus then says, 'valete!' ('wa-lay-tay'), which means 'goodbye!' The pupils can reply 'vale!'. Just like with 'hello', the greeting changes depending on how whether the speaker is addressing one or many people.