

Teaching notes on 4.02a Roman board games

Slide 1

Learning objective: To make and play an authentic Roman board game.

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?') (NB 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 pupils is doing 'male' (badly). *Lucundus* will then catch his 'Roman register' and will ask, 'quis adest?' ('Who is here?'). You can now take the register using the pupils' new Roman names, to which they can call, 'adsum!' ('I am here!') in response.

Slide 2

Mouse-clicks show primary and secondary archaeological evidence of Roman board games, played by children and adults alike. The first photo shows a wall painting from Pompeii of a group playing a board game. This could be *ludus latruncularum* (game of mercenaries, a strategy game) or *ludus calculorum* (game of pebbles, a Roman game very similar to Go). The next picture shows a Roman die (*alea*), which is pretty identical to the six-sided ones we use today. Dice were often used for gambling. The last picture is of a *rota* ('wheel') board, found in widely across the Roman Empire, and this is what the pupils are going to make and use to play a game today. It's a bit like a souped-up version of noughts and crosses.

There are some lovely word roots here – 'ludus' ('game') gives us the English words 'interlude', 'ludicrous' and 'Ludo'. 'Calculus', meaning 'pebble' is where we get the word 'calculate' (small stones being used as an aid to arithmetic). 'Rota' ('wheel') gives us words like 'rotate', 'rotor', 'rotary' and 'rotation'. The pupils may also recognise that these words are all nouns ending in -us or -a (including 'alea'), drawing on the previous lesson's learning.

Slides 3-6

These slides guide the pupils through making and then playing the game, with a video of the game in action on slide 6. The pupil worksheet also has the instructions written on it, so it's useful to have a print-out for each work group.

Slide 7

The plenary slide:

Question 1 What kind of games did the Romans like to play in their spare time? [*ludus calculorum* – game of pebbles, *ludus latruncularum* – game of mercenaries, *alea* – dice, *rota* – wheel]

Question 2 What is the Latin name of the Roman game that you made and played today?
[Rota – the wheel]

Question 3 Can you think of any English words that come from this Latin word? [rotate, rotation, rotary, rotisserie, rotor]