

SELF-LED ACTIVITY

PAID LIKE A ROMAN

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- **×** **KS1-2**

Recommended for

KS1-2 (History, Maths)

Learning objectives

- Use numeracy skills to make calculations
- Understand the size and wealth of the Roman army along Hadrian's Wall
- Make connections between mathematical learning and history

Time to complete

10–30 minutes dependent on numeracy skill level



Children get up close with Roman coins at an English Heritage site along Hadrian's Wall.

SUMMARY

In this cross-curricular activity students use their numeracy skills to understand life as a soldier along Hadrian's Wall. Students carry out calculations to work out how many soldiers were in the army and how much their pay was really worth.

INSTRUCTIONS

Print off and photocopy enough copies of the activity on pages 92–94 for your group. You know your group best and how much support and time they might need to complete the activity. KS2 students may prefer to guide their own learning and complete it individually. Teachers of KS1 may prefer to guide students through the challenges, perhaps picking one challenge to complete as a class each day.

MORE LEARNING IDEAS

Get students to explore more of the maths along the wall using flash card 5 on page 47. Get them to design their own calculation challenges for a partner using the numbers on the flashcard. For example, 2,352 tonnes of stone and clay were used in every 100m. How many tonnes were used along the full length of the wall?

PAID LIKE A ROMAN

EXPLORE ROMAN FOOD
ALONG HADRIAN'S WALL

See if you can complete each of these mathematical challenges to find out more about life as a soldier along Hadrian's Wall.

1 LEGIONARIES

A unit of legionary soldiers was called a legion. There were 30 legions covering the whole empire. Each legion was divided into 10 cohorts. Within each cohort there were 6 centuries, and each century was made up of 80 men.



CHALLENGE TIME!



Use the information to calculate how many individual legionary soldiers there were in the Roman army.

DID YOU KNOW?



Legionaries left their mark on the wall in centurial stones. These recorded the names of the commanders of the centuries that built each section of the wall.



A visitor examines a Roman coin during an event on Hadrian's Wall.

2 ROMAN MONEY

A **sestertius** was a large copper alloy coin. When you have more than one you call them sestertii. A denarius was a silver coin. When you have more than one you call them denarii. Four sestertii were equal to one denarius coin.

CHALLENGE TIME!



Use the information above and the DID YOU KNOW? box to **calculate** how much an auxiliary soldier was paid in denarii.

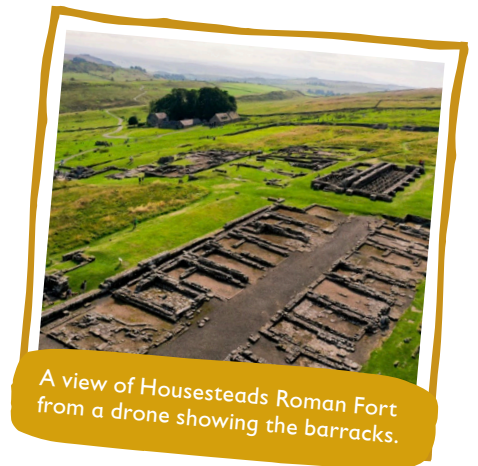
DID YOU KNOW?



The basic pay for an auxiliary soldier in the 2nd century AD was 1,000 sestertii a year. They were paid three or four times a year.

3 HOW MUCH?

At Housesteads Roman Fort up to 800 soldiers could live in the barracks at one time. Each one was paid at least 1,000 sestertii a year.



A view of Housesteads Roman Fort from a drone showing the barracks.

CHALLENGE TIME!



Calculate how much it cost to pay the 800 soldiers at Housesteads Roman Fort each year in both sestertii and denarii.

DID YOU KNOW?



The letter d (for denarius) was used up until 1971 to represent pence. For example, 6d would today be written down as 6p (six pence).



A visitor trying on a helmet and shield at Housesteads Roman Fort.

4 BIG SPENDERS

Infantry soldiers had money deducted from their earnings to pay for their uniform, weapons, food and drink. Probably only 25% of their pay could be spent how they liked. Cavalry soldiers had to spend about 20% of their earnings just looking after their horses.

CHALLENGE TIME!



Use the information above and your answer to question 2 to **Calculate** how many sestertii and denarii infantry soldiers had to spend how they liked.

DID YOU KNOW?



A 6th-century coin showing Emperor Justinian I was found at Birdoswald. Britain had left the Roman Empire, but clearly still had some links with it.

5 BUYING POWER

Documents from Vindolanda show that a cloak might cost between 3 and 11 denarii, depending on its quality. This works out as between £210 and £805 in today's money.



An artist's impression of an auxiliary soldier in about AD 125.

CHALLENGE TIME!



Use the information above and your answer to question 3 to work out if an ordinary soldier on Hadrian's Wall could afford to buy a top quality cloak.

DID YOU KNOW?



A soldier's pay works out to be about £18,000 a year in modern money.