

History – Rome Unit project

Look through the books on Rome and find something that really interests you. It can be **a person, a place, event, or some aspect of Roman life**. Look through several books or on several internet sources before you decide on a topic so that you get a good feel for the culture and what is available. Your topic should be something that excites you, because you are going to make a piece of art about it – and any true artist should be excited about his/her topic.

The Roman and Italian cultures are well known for their remarkable works of art. Some of the world's greatest artists have come from there. Can you name any? Once you have chosen a topic, just like any artist, you will need to choose a **medium** to work in. (medium = what materials you use) You can choose from the five following:

- 1. A fresco (a painting done on plaster)**
- 2. A sculpture (a head would work best)**
- 3. A 3-D re-creation of some building or scene**
- 4. A mosaic (done on stiff paper with pieces of greeting cards, etc.)**
- 5. A bas-relief carving (a carving done onto some hard surface)**

You may want to choose a medium first and then choose a topic that would fit the medium that you would like to do. Depending on your topic and the medium you choose, you may need to purchase some of your own supplies. You will need to make sure this is okay with your parents.

All work is to be done at home. There will be no class time provided to work on this project.

You will write a **"museum card"** to go along with your piece of art (more information to follow). The card will include the following information:

1. Information about the artist (you, pretending you lived in ancient Rome)
2. When the piece was done (you are to pretend that it was done during Ancient Roman times),
3. What materials were used (depending on your topic you can be truthful or make some things up)
4. Where the piece was "found".
5. Tell a bit about what the piece shows us about Roman life.

In addition, there must be the equivalent of 1-page, double space worth of information. This information is about what the art is showing, not how the art is made. The focus of the research should be on the topic, not the medium. Make sure to include a bibliography with at least two sources!

Your teacher is looking for the EFFORT that you put into this project much more than the final product!

Fresco

Description: A fresco is a painting that is done on plaster (usually a wall). The plaster can be wet or dry. The artist first makes a sketch of what they are going to paint on a piece of paper. Then the artist either plasters an area that is just big enough to paint and begins, or prepares a plaster surface and lets it dry before painting. This medium would be a good choice for showing a way of life, or an important scene or event.

Materials: Plaster of Paris, water, shoebox lid, paints (watercolors) and brushes, two paperclips and rags for clean up. *(Note: clean up cannot be done at a sink since the plaster can harden in the pipes. Adult supervision required.)*

Requirements: You will need to hand in both a preliminary sketch and an actual fresco as big as a shoebox lid. The scene should be detailed and brightly painted.

Sculpture

Description: The greatest Roman sculptures were carved out of marble and depicted famous people, and important events in history of mythology. They didn't usually show every day people and events. This medium would be a good choice for someone who wants to tell about an important person in Roman history.

Materials: This project can be done two ways: 1. You can get a piece of clay and do a detailed sculpture and let it dry (there is air-dry clay so you don't need to fire it). You could also sculpt it out of other materials such as paper mache'. OR 2. You can bake a piece of sculpy or get some other material (clay etc.) that can be carved and try to carve the shape out like a piece of marble. This last choice may be more challenging.

Requirements: A sculpted head (other figures can be done if approved of by your teacher). It should be mounted on a base of wood or some other material.

3-D re-creation of a building or scene

Description: The Romans built beautiful buildings, some of which are still standing today. They took their time and used long lasting materials. Their buildings were beautiful as well as functional. Pick a building and make a 3-D replica.

Materials: paper, cardboard, toothpicks, Popsicle sticks, glue or whatever else works for you (you may not use clay except to hold things together)

Requirements: The size of the model will depend on your topic and materials. It should be detailed and have some kind of setting or background.

Mosaic

Description: A mosaic is a picture that is made up of small cut pieces of tile or marble. The advantage of a mosaic is that it doesn't lose its color and holds up well over time. The Romans knew how to make mosaics that were so detailed that you could not tell they weren't a painting unless you stood up very close to them. This medium takes a lot of patience and planning. It would be a good choice to show a simple scene or article from Roman life. It could also be done as a design.

Materials: Greeting cards/colored/patterned paper cut up into small pieces, glue and a sturdy piece of white cardboard.

Requirements: The size of the mosaic will depend on the subject. It must have some kind of decorative border and no 'white' space.

Bas-relief

Description: A bas-relief is a sculpture technique in which figures or other designs are just barely more prominent than the background. This effect is created either by carving away the material or adding material to the smooth background. The figures and scenes stand out and give a 3-D effect. They were often done on doors, pieces of furniture, buildings and other walls to depict famous historical scenes or the lives of important people.

Materials: Roll out a slab of clay, bake it and then try to carve it with kitchen knives and other tools. There are other materials you could carve or sculpt (be careful of some foam as it can be difficult to paint, so test it first). You could also use another material to begin with, start with your flat background and build up your "relief" design (things like paper mache' would work well).

Requirements: A carved/sculpted piece about the size of a shoebox lid with some kind of decorative border.