

The Roman Army

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The growth of the Roman Empire was due, in large part, to the success of the Roman army. The Roman army was incredibly well-trained and organised and relied on the complete obedience of its soldiers.

The Roman army was made up of two different types of soldiers – **legionaries** and **auxiliaries**.



Legionaries were strong and healthy Roman citizens, above the age of 17. They were well-trained and more highly paid than the auxiliaries. Legionaries agreed to fight for the army for 25 years and, in return, were rewarded with a plot of land to call their own after they left the army.

Auxiliaries were not Roman citizens and were paid less than half of a legionary's salary. They were used to complete the less important and most dangerous jobs, such as defending forts and heading into battle first.

A **legion** was made up of around 5000 legionaries and was commanded by a **legate**. Each legion was further divided into smaller groups of around 80 legionaries, called **centuries** and led by a **centurion**. Centurions carried a short stick which identified him as the leader of his century and could also be used to beat any disobedient legionaries! There were also **artillery** soldiers, who used bows and arrows or were in charge of catapults, firing heavy objects at enemies and **cavalry** soldiers, who rode into battle on horses.



Roman legionaries used their three weapons – a sword, spear and dagger – to fight with but also used their shields, known as a **scutum**, to fight with, as well as to defend themselves.

Roman soldiers went into battle in tight formations, each using their scutum to protect themselves and those around them. This was known as **testudo** – the Latin word meaning tortoise!



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Read the Roman army text and choose which set of questions you would like to answer.

*I can retrieve answers from a text.

- 1) Why was the Roman army so successful?
- 2) What are the different types of soldiers called?
- 3) Where did the legionaries come from?
- 4) How were the legionaries rewarded?
- 5) What jobs did the auxiliaries do?
- 6) What was a legion and who was in charge?
- 7) Who was a centurion and how could you tell who he was?
- 8) What weapons did the Romans have?

**I can retrieve answers from a text and give my opinion.

- 1) How do you think the Roman army helped the growth of the Roman Empire?
- 2) Describe the two different types of soldiers.
- 3) What differences are there between the two types of soldier?
- 4) Why do you think the legionaries and auxiliaries were treated differently?
- 5) Why did a centurion carry a stick?
- 6) Who were the artillery soldiers?
- 7) What equipment did the Roman army use?
- 8) Why do you think the battle formation was called a **testudo**?