

The Roman Army

Only men could be in the Roman Army. No women. Every Roman soldier was a Roman citizen. He had to be at least 20 years old. He was not supposed to get married while he was a soldier. Most soldiers in the Roman Empire came from countries outside Italy. There were Roman soldiers from Africa, Gaul, Germany, the Balkans, Spain and the Middle East.

Soldiers had to stay in the army for at least 25 years. Then they could retire, with a pension or a gift of land to farm. This was very clever because it meant that Rome had loyal ex-soldiers all over the provinces who could be called on to defend their homes. Old soldiers often settled down to old age together, in a military town or colonia.

There were about 30 legions in the Roman Army. Each legion had between 4000 and 6000 soldiers, called legionaries. Each legion had ten cohorts. Each cohort was made up of six troops of about 80 legionaries, called centuries. Each century was led by a centurion. A centurion carried a stick, to show his importance. He could also use his stick to beat any soldier who disobeyed an order. The officer commanding the whole legion was called a legate.

Legionaries were the best Roman soldiers, and the best paid. There were other soldiers though. An auxiliary was a soldier who was not a Roman citizen. He was paid a third as much as a legionary. Auxiliaries guarded forts and frontiers, but also fought in battles, often in the front lines (most dangerous). Usually, Romans liked to fight on foot. They used cavalry, soldiers on horses, to chase a fleeing enemy. In a battle, the cavalry often lined up either side of the foot-soldiers, or infantry.

Day 1 - Reading Fluency

Read the text yourself and then get someone to read it with you. Each person reads a paragraph until you get to the end. Then repeat but reading the alternative paragraph this time.

Discuss the text and any words that you did not understand.

Day 2 - Vocabulary

1. Write what you think the following words mean

Citizen

Retire

Legions

Disobeyed

Fleeing

2. What other words could the author have used instead of commanding?

Day 3 - Retrieval

1. Were all Roman soldiers from Italy?
2. Which soldiers were paid the most money?
3. Who was in charge of an entire legion?
4. How much was an auxiliary paid?
5. How many legionaries made up a legion?

Remember to answer each question in a complete sentence. Use words from the question to help you to write your answer.

Day 4 -

1. Find another word for 'soldiers on horses'
2. How many legions were there in the Roman army?
3. Why do you think women were not allowed to be in the Roman army?
4. What is the Latin word for a military town?
5. Summarise the main points of this text in no more than 50 words.

Day 5

True or False?

	True	False
Most soldiers in the Roman army came from Italy		
Soldiers had to stay in the army for at least 20 years.		
When they retired they got a gift of land or a farm.		
Each legion had 10 cohorts.		
Auxiliaries were the best Roman soldiers and the best paid.		

For all the statements that you have said are false, can you write out what the correct statement should be.