

# Roman Mosaic Niche

This activity has been designed as a starting point for looking, talking and doing together. The **Look** and **Think** activities should take 5 -10 minutes.

The **Do** activities might take longer depending on the task and how creative you are feeling!



**Roman mosaic niche**

**Baie, Italy**

**AD 50-70**

**GR.159.1910**



## Look

Set a timer for 1 minute and look really carefully.

When the time is up, look away and make a list of what shapes, colours and details can you remember.

Now have another look and check your answers!



## Think

This beautiful mosaic niche once decorated a Roman villa in Baie, near Naples in Italy.

It dates back to between AD 50-70. Can you find this date on the timeline on the next page?

What was happening in Britain at this time?



## Do

Roman mosaics were made of thousands of tiny coloured stones and gems. Each one was individually laid by hand into wet plaster.

Watch our [video and make your own mosaic.](#)



Mosaic floors and decorations were a statement of the wealth and importance of the owner, as many materials such as coloured stones or glass were rare and often expensive. The mosaic consists of a plaster background that has been covered with coloured squares, or tesserae, of glass and other materials including Egyptian blue, marble and other types of stone, bordered with shells. The niche may have held a small statue and the mosaic would have provided an idyllic garden background with three birds coming to land and a colourful peacock already resting at the bottom. The presence of the peacock, an expensive bird and status symbol, indicates that the person who commissioned the mosaic was making a statement about his wealth and position.

# Roman Mosaic Niche







Antinous, lover of the Roman Emperor Hadrian, about AD 130-150.  
GR.100.1937

Silver coin of the Roman Emperor Claudius, about AD 43-48.  
CM.98-4929



Etruscan bronze warrior, about 550-450 BC.  
GR.18.1933



Athenian black-figure amphora, about 510 BC.  
GR.31.1864



Mycenaean Linear B tablet, about 1350 BC.  
GR.1.198



Cycladic marble figurine, about 2700-2400 BC.  
GR.17.1824

## Greek World

- Greece becomes a Roman province, 146 BC
- Alexander the Great of Macedon extends the boundaries of the 'Greek' world as far as India and Egypt, 336-323 BC
- Plato's Academy founded at Athens, about 385 BC
- Parthenon temple built at Athens, 447-432 BC
- Battle of Marathon fought between Greeks and Persians, 490 BC
- Democracy established at Athens from about 500 BC
- Coinage invented in Lydia (Asia Minor), about 600 BC
- Iliad* and *Odyssey* reach their final form, about 700 BC
- Traditional date for the first Olympic Games, 776 BC

GREEKS

ETRUSCANS

MYCENAENS

MINOANS

CYCLADIC CULTURE

## Roman World

- Emperor Constantine re-unites Eastern and Western Empire and makes Constantinople (now Istanbul) the new capital city. Christianity becomes the official religion of the Empire. AD 306-337
- AD 284 Emperor Diocletian divides the Roman Empire into East and West
- AD 122-128 Emperor Hadrian builds wall in northern England
- AD 79 Eruption of Vesuvius, destroying Pompeii and Herculaneum
- AD 43 Invasion and conquest of Britain by Emperor Claudius
- 19 BC Virgil's *Aeneid* completed
- 27 BC-AD 14 Augustus becomes first Emperor of Rome
- 31-30 BC Death of Antony and Cleopatra, following defeat at battle of Actium
- 44 BC Assassination of Julius Caesar
- 507 BC Roman Republic established
- 753 BC Traditional date for Romulus' foundation of Rome

ROMANS

AD 500

AD 570  
Birth of the Prophet Mohammed at Mecca

AD 1

about 6-4 BC  
Birth of Jesus

500 BC

259-210 BC  
Qin Shi Huang, first emperor of China, completes the Great Wall of China and builds the Tomb of the Terracotta Army

1000 BC

486 BC  
Birth of Buddha  
551-479 BC  
Confucius, Chinese philosopher  
about 605-562 BC  
Nebuchadnezzar II, King of Babylon

1500 BC

about 1333-1324 BC  
Tutankhamun Pharaoh in Egypt

2000 BC

about 2100-2000 BC  
Ziggurat built at Ur in Sumer (now Iraq)

2500 BC

Stonehenge built on Salisbury Plain, England, about 2500-2200 BC  
about 2560 BC  
Great Pyramid built at Giza, Egypt

## Other World Events