

A MESSAGE THROUGH TIME

Written by ANNA CIDDOR

RECOMMENDED FOR: Ages 9 – 13 years old (UPPER PRIMARY and LOWER SECONDARY)

GENRE: Middle Grade

VALUES: Time-slip, adventure, historical fiction.

THEMES: Ancient Roman childhood, friendship, step-families, adventure, courage, resilience, gender roles, past and present, connections through time.

CURRICULUM LEARNING AREAS:

- English: Literature, Literacy and Language
- Humanities and Social Sciences: History
- Latin

NOTES WRITTEN BY: Dr Tamara Lewit

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INTRODUCTION

Award-winning author and illustrator Anna Ciddor has created an exciting time-slip novel that carries the main characters (and the readers) back to Roman times – and also, accidentally, drags a Roman girl into the present. This standalone companion novel to the acclaimed *The Boy Who Stepped Through Time* (Allen and Unwin 2021) features meticulous historical research and a roller-coaster adventure that will have young readers on the edge of their seats.

PLOT SUMMARY

New step-siblings, Felix (11) and Zoe (15) resent being thrust into this relationship, and when Felix finds a magic stylus that takes him back to ancient Roman times, Zoe is furious to find herself dragged along. Things only get worse when they accidentally bring a Roman girl into the present and struggle to return her to her proper place in the past. They embark on a difficult journey upriver to a distant sacred spring – but to his horror Felix has lost the precious stylus that is their only way back to the present! He must learn to use all his resources and stand up to a bully before he can earn his step-sister's respect and they can find their way home. Through their adventures, the step-siblings overcome their antagonism and form a bond – and the Roman girl starts to re-evaluate her goals in life. *A Message Through Time* is a fun and exciting read, stimulating many issues for discussion, as well as providing a vivid and meticulously researched picture of a young girl's life in southern France in 315 CE.

BEFORE READING

- What does the cover suggest to you about the story? Turn the book upside down – what does it show when you look at it this way?
- What do you know about the Romans and their Empire? Look at a map of the Roman Empire. Discuss which modern countries – e.g. Britain and France, Tunisia and Egypt – were part of the Empire.
- Have you read any of the author's other books?
- Related online links for further research can be found in the Additional Links and Resources section at the end of these notes.

Q&A WITH ANNA CIDDOR

a) How did you become an author?

I was brought up in a house without television so I and my two younger sisters were very creative. One of our favourite activities was drawing pictures of characters on cards and writing or acting out stories about them. When I was about ten, I started writing a novel about ancient Roman times. It opened with a boy running down a street in a tunic, the cobblestones hot under his bare feet. But I didn't get far. I didn't know enough about Romans, and I didn't have an idea for a plot. Yet ...

My first career was as a senior school maths teacher, but when my children came along, I decided to use my creative talents and have a go at becoming an author and illustrator instead. I began with non-fiction books, mostly about Australian history, but despite a publisher's warning that 'Non-fiction authors can't write fiction' I took the plunge into historical fiction and my first fantasy historical novel *Runestone*, based on real Viking lifestyle and beliefs, was a success. When my youngest sister, now a Roman historian with a PhD in archaeology, was looking for a new project, I jokingly suggested that we collaborate on a book together. She jumped at the idea, bubbling with excitement. 'What would we write about?' she asked. 'Ancient Rome, of course!' I said, my mind flying to that image of the boy running down a cobbled street.

b) What inspired you to write a time-slip story?

I absolutely love writing time-slip. It is so revealing and thought-provoking to throw modern people into the past and see how they react – and cope! It is also a great lark to bring someone from the past into the future, so I decided to do that in *A Message Through Time*. The main character in my previous book, *The Boy Who Stepped Through Time*, was based on my nephew Lucas. When his sister, my niece, read the book, and learned about the embarrassing communal toilets, and the disgusting Roman food like dormice and pigeons, she made the comment, 'I'm glad you didn't send ME back in time!' Instantly, I decided that in my next book I would send back a reluctant teenage girl! In *A Message Through Time*, I gave myself – and the modern characters – extra challenges by throwing them in at the deep end, knowing nothing about Roman times and wearing inappropriate modern clothes!

c) What was it like working with a collaborator?

It was a joy to have a companion who gets just as ridiculously excited as I do about digging into the past. I needed all sorts of accurate and obscure details to be able to picture the scenes and make my descriptions vivid. Every part of the story threw up more questions: At what age would a young girl be betrothed? What was life like dragging a heavy river boat by manpower? How did Romans tell fortunes and banish ghosts? What did they eat for lunch? What exactly went on at a sacred spring? I would text or email my questions to my sister,



and she searched through secondary sources in the form of historical research and primary source evidence such as archaeological finds, images in mosaics or wall paintings, and ancient sources like letters or poems, sometimes translating them from Latin, to find answers. All the illustrations are just as meticulously researched, and based on mosaics, wall-paintings, sculptures and archaeological finds of objects like earrings, river boats or buildings from the period. I had to draw many versions of each illustration before the researcher was satisfied!

d) What do you see as the major themes/essence of this book?

The relationship between the two step-siblings, the nature of friendship, Roman life including gender roles and the different lifestyles of the upper classes, slaves, children and beggars in every detail from food to clothes to modes of transport. At the start, the three main characters don't get on or understand each other. The dynamics between the three provide lots of opportunities for friction and emotional growth. Each of the characters learn from one another and is changed by their adventures – even Petronia's pet dog!

A WORD FROM THE RESEARCHER

Even though I have been researching Roman archaeology for forty years, to find the information Anna needed for this book and for our previous collaboration on *The Boy Who Stepped Through Time*, I read more than one thousand books and articles and sent questions to archaeologists and historians around the world. It was a tremendous challenge to find out the details of children's everyday lives, for which we have so few written sources. It was thrilling to see it all come to life through Anna's magical writing.

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

ENGLISH

AC ACHIEVEMENT STANDARD

Year 4: Describe how ideas are developed including through characters and events

Year 5: Explain how ideas are developed including through characters, settings and/or events

Year 6: Identify how ideas are presented and developed including through characters, settings and/or events

- At the start of the book, Zoe resents her stepfamily and Felix finds her annoying. Using the map worksheet (based on the illustration on pages viii–ix), make a timeline of how Felix and Zoe's relationship and attitudes to each other change during the book. Mark each change, with the chapter number, on the place on the map worksheet where this change occurs.

Year 6: Explore themes of interpersonal relationships in real-world and imagined settings

- *A Message Through Time* explores the ups and downs of a friendship between the modern girl, Zoe, and a Roman girl, Petronia. What does Petronia learn about friendship over the course of the book? How does she come to re-evaluate her goals in life as a result of her friendship with a girl from the future? How does Zoe help her learn to make a new and more appropriate friend in Chapter 52?

LANGUAGE

AC LANGUAGE FOR INTERACTING WITH OTHERS

Year 4: Explore language used to develop relationships in formal and informal situations

Year 5: Understand that language is selected for social contexts and that it helps to signal social roles and relationships

- A number of characters appear in Chapters 33 to 34: Felix, who is pretending to be a slave; Zoe, who is pretending to be a respected doctor; the young Roman girl, Petronia; her mother and uncle; a man she may marry and other guests; Housekeeper Rustica, Grillius (the slave who looks after Petronia), and the household slave Mogsia.
- What can you observe about how these characters interact with each other: how do they address each other differently; how does their body language express their status and relationships; and how does this show who is more – or less – respected and why?
- Use this information to make a chart of the status (or pretended status) of each character mentioned, from highest to lowest.

Year 4: Identify the subjective language of opinion and feeling, and the objective language of factual reporting

Year 6: Understand the uses of objective and subjective language

- In Chapter 48, Felix visits the docks in the darkness and encounters a group of bullies. The author describes this from his subjective viewpoint, using evocative language to convey his emotions, thoughts and the significance of events to him. Rewrite the chapter from an objective viewpoint, simply listing his actions and what occurs. Note the differences between the two pieces of writing. How does the author's use of subjective language evoke emotion in the reader?

AC TEXT STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION

Year 4: Identify how text connectives including temporal and conditional words are used to sequence and connect ideas

- In Chapter 22, Felix spends a whole day hauling the barge. How does the author use connectives, temporal and conditional words to describe the passage of time and changes in his feelings across five pages?

AC LANGUAGE FOR EXPRESSING AND DEVELOPING IDEAS

Year 4: Expand vocabulary by exploring a range of synonyms and antonyms, and using words encountered in a range of sources

Year 5: Understand how vocabulary is used to express greater precision of meaning

Year 6: Understand how ideas can be expanded and sharpened through careful choice of verbs

- In Chapter 29, the modern children have their first glimpse of a real Roman villa. How does the author use precise vocabulary so that the reader can see the scene more vividly? List the words she uses to express colours, size, facial expressions, movement, shapes, location, types of plants and materials, and styles of clothing.
- In the dramatic climax of the novel in Chapter 51, the author uses the word 'said' once, and synonyms or alternative phrases 25 times! Find each example, and think about how her use of each word adds to the meaning or atmosphere of the scene.

Year 5: Explore the history of words

- In Chapter 4, Felix finds himself talking Latin. What are the two Latin words he says on page 20, and what do they mean in English? Can you think of any English words which come from these two Latin words?
- In Chapter 45 Felix uses the word 'dinosaur' and in Chapter 24, Zoe mentions 'hypothermia'. Look at the web page Time travel secrets <https://annaciddor.com/time-travel-secrets/> to find out more about these words. Try to find more information about the Greek root words from which they were created.

- Felix and Zoe must use the Latin word 'Vale', meaning 'goodbye', to return to their own time. Do you know of any modern use of this word? Find out about English words derived from this root.

Year 6: Identify and explain how images and maps contribute to meaning

- How is the sequence of events in the novel represented visually by the map on pages viii–ix? Print the map worksheet, and at each point, write the key event or character development in the plot which occurs there.

LITERATURE

AC LITERATURE AND CONTEXTS

Year 4: Recognise similar storylines, ideas and relationships in different contexts in literary texts

- In Chapter 30, the children have their first household mealtime after returning to the Roman world. How is this mealtime like or unlike one in your household? Consider the food, where it is eaten, the way it is eaten, and the household members present. What are the little details that reveal a particular period and culture? Note: for images related to this scene, see web page Houses and Villas <https://annaciddor.com/houses-and-villas/>

Year 5: Identify aspects of literary texts that represent details or information about historical, social and cultural contexts

- Chapter 49 conveys many details and information about Roman life, households, slavery, entertainment and everyday life. Make a list of all the details you have learned.
- Discuss as a class how the author uses images, dialogue and character descriptions to tell us something indirectly, and to avoid sounding like an information text.

AC ENGAGING WITH AND RESPONDING TO LITERATURE

Year 5: Present an opinion on a literary text using specific terms about literary devices, text structures and language features, and reflect on the viewpoints of others

- From Chapters 18 to 51, Felix keeps the loss of the stylus a secret from Zoe because he dreads how she will react. Do you think he should have told her at the start, or earlier than he did? What do you think might have happened if he had done so? Discuss as a class, giving everyone a chance to present their points of view.

AC EXAMINING LITERATURE

Year 4: Discuss how authors and illustrators make stories engaging by the way they develop character, setting and plot tensions

- In Chapter 1, we meet two of the main characters, Zoe and Felix. Through their dialogue, actions and thoughts, what do we learn about them? Consider their: personalities, relationships, circumstances, likes and dislikes.
- In Chapter 4, we meet the main Roman character, Petronia, and her mother, Eugenia. How does the author use the description of their appearance and behaviour on pages 20–22 to give us a sense of who they are before we are introduced to them by name on page 22?
- From Chapters 18 to 51, Felix is faced with the choice of whether to tell Zoe about the loss of the stylus so that she can help him find it, or to struggle to find it alone. How does the author make the reader care about this decision and its consequences? What different elements are added to Felix's dilemma and how does the author make the story interesting by adding new twists as the plot unfolds?

Year 5: Recognise that the point of view in a literary text influences how readers interpret and respond to events and characters

- There are three central characters in the novel, Zoe, Felix and Petronia. The author had chosen to tell the story from the viewpoint of one of these characters – who is it? How is this established in Chapter 1? How does this character's point of view affect how you experience the Roman world in the story?
- Is Zoe a likeable character? Why, or why not? Does this change during the course of the story? How does the point of view from which the story is told influence how you see Zoe?

Year 6: Identify and explain characteristics that define an author's individual style

- In Chapter 4, we meet the main Roman character, Petronia, and her mother, Eugenia. How does the author use Felix's voice, a distinctive style of vocabulary, and the plot development on pages 20–22 to give us a vivid picture of who they are and their place in Roman society?
- Visit the web page How I found out about the past <https://annaciddor.com/how-i-found-out-about-the-past/> and find at least one example of how the author used a real Roman object or image in her illustration of Petronia at the front of the book.

AC CREATING LITERATURE

Year 4: Create and edit literary texts by developing storylines, characters and settings

- In Chapter 1, Felix finds a message hidden in a bottle.
Teachers: read this chapter to the students but pause after this point on page 6:
'It's written in English,' he said, 'and it says . . . ' He goggled at the words. 'It says . . . '
Stop here and ask students to complete Chapter 1 in their own way, choosing what is written on the message and describing how Felix and Zoe react.

Year 6: Identify responses to characters and events in literary texts, drawn from historical, social or cultural contexts

- Is there a hero in *A Message Through Time*? Is there more than one? Who do you identify as the hero or heroes in the book and why?

Year 6: Create and edit literary texts that adapt plot structure, characters, settings and/or ideas from texts students have experienced, and experiment with literary devices

- Create a new narrative in which Felix tells Zoe about the lost stylus and it is Zoe, not Felix, who gets it back.
- Create an autobiography of Petronia: tell her story before and after the novel begins and ends.

LITERACY

Year 5: Use appropriate interaction skills to make connections to your own experience, and present and justify an opinion or idea

- When they enter the Roman world, Zoe and Felix find that men and women, boys and girls, adults and children, slaves (or freed slaves) and masters have different and fixed roles. Have you had any feelings or experiences of being expected to behave in a particular way because of your gender, age or status? Do you think that people should have clear roles for any of these reasons? Justify your opinion.

AC ANALYSING, INTERPRETING AND EVALUATING

Year 4: Identify the characteristic features used in imaginative texts to meet the purpose of the text

- In Chapter 3, Felix and Zoe are transported through time into the Roman world. How does the author use language to help readers feel like they are experiencing the sights, sounds and smells of this world with them?

Year 6: Use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring and questioning to build literal and inferred meaning, and to connect and compare content from a variety of sources

- How is Petronia's family life different from yours? What is different? Would you like to be part of her household? Why – or why not?
- Do you have siblings or step-siblings, or are you an only child like Petronia? Have you had any feelings or experiences like Felix, Zoe or Petronia?
- Look at the images of Zoe, Felix, Petronia and Furia on pages x and xi. Based on the written text in the novel, write a summary of the characters and their stories to match each character's image.

ASSESSMENT:

- In Chapters 6 to 12, the Roman girl, Petronia, is brought into modern times and then travels back to the past, only to find that something has gone wrong. The author writes this from the point of view of the modern boy, Felix. Rewrite these chapters from Petronia's point of view.

- Would you like to go back into the past like Zoe and Felix? Why – or why not? Write a story where you go back in time (to Roman times, or a different period) or write a letter home to someone in the present, describing your experiences.

HISTORY YEAR 7

THE ANCIENT WORLD

AC: How the physical environment and geographical features influenced the development of the ancient society

- What natural and artificial (built) geographical features can you identify on the map worksheet (based on the illustration on pages viii–ix)? What roles do these features play in the lives of the Romans in the story? What differences do you see between this and modern society?

AC: The organisation and roles of key groups in ancient society such as the nobility, women and slaves, and how they influenced and changed society

- In Chapters 6 to 11, the Roman girl, Petronia, is brought into the future, and finds herself in a world without slaves. What do her reactions and comments tell you about the roles of slaves in Roman society? What does she see as her own role as an upper-class girl, and that of her mother? What is important to her in defining herself as upper class? Investigate the real life of a woman called Eumachia, who lived in ancient Pompeii. How do we know about her?
- In Chapter 34, Felix and Zoe hear about Petronia's proposed betrothal, which is decided in Chapter 42. What do you learn about Roman marriage? Consider the age of betrothal and marriage (male and female), the meaning of a marriage, and who makes decisions about marriages.
- What do we learn in Chapter 44 about the roles of upper-class men in contrast to women? Use the historical notes on pages 313–319 to help you. What unusual primary source was used to research this chapter?

AC: Identify perspectives, attitudes and values of the past in sources

- In Chapter 42, the children visit the home of Icciana, Eugenia's freedwoman and former slave. What do you learn in this chapter about the roles of slaves and freed slaves and their relationships with their masters? Check the web page Houses and villas <https://annaciddor.com/houses-and-villas/> to find out what primary source was used for this chapter. Investigate more about this source.

AC: Key beliefs, values and practices of an ancient society, with a particular emphasis on everyday life or death and funerary customs

- Compare Chapters 8 to 10, when the Roman girl, Petronia, is brought into a home of the future; Chapters 27 to 28 in which the children visit a sacred place; Chapter 40 which takes place during Lemuria; and Chapter 50, in Roman Arelate. Use the

historical notes on page 317 and the web page Religion and beliefs
<https://annaciddor.com/religion-and-beliefs/>

- Consider the following questions:
 - Where could Roman religious activities take place?
 - On what kind of occasions did religious activities take place?
 - Who participated and what ritual actions did they carry out?
 - What did Romans expect of their gods, and what did they expect to do to please their gods?
 - Where did Roman religious practices come from?
 - What kinds of evidence do we have to tell us about it?
- In Chapter 39, the children attend a funeral. What funeral rituals and actions do they carry out? Read the historical notes on page 315: what unusual primary sources were used to research this chapter? Look at the web page How I found out about the past <https://annaciddor.com/how-i-found-out-about-the-past/>: What other kinds of sources can be used?
- In Chapters 4 and 5, Zoe and Felix visit a Roman bathhouse. What is it like? Visit the web page How I found out about the past <https://annaciddor.com/how-i-found-out-about-the-past/>. What are some of the sources that can be used to find out about bathhouses? View the digital reconstruction video of the bathhouse of Diocletian in Rome, produced by the National Roman Museum.
- In Chapter 53, Zoe and Felix visit a Roman theatre. Read the historical notes on pages 317–318 and the web page Theatre <https://annaciddor.com/theatre/>
 - When were Roman theatre performances held?
 - How was a Roman theatre similar to or different from a modern theatre?
 - How is the performance in the story similar to or different from modern theatre?
 - Investigate the story of the competition for the golden apple. What is the story, where did it originate, and how do we know it was popular in the Roman Empire?
 - What were some of the sources used to research this chapter?
 - Visit the web page How I found out about the past <https://annaciddor.com/how-i-found-out-about-the-past/>: what other kinds of sources can be used?

AC: The role and achievements of a significant individual in an ancient society

- In Chapter 2, Felix sees coins of a particular Emperor. Who is he, and when did he live? (Note the character in the story uses a French system of dating. How is it

different from that used in Australia?). Investigate the impact of this emperor on society and religion in the Roman Empire.

- Even though the story takes place after the Christian religion had begun to develop in the Roman Empire, the Roman characters are not Christian. Why do you think this is the case?

QUESTIONING AND RESEARCHING

AC: Locate and identify primary and secondary sources to use in historical inquiry

- Visit the web page How I found out about the past <https://annaciddor.com/how-i-found-out-about-the-past/>
- What different types of primary sources are mentioned and illustrated on this page?
- Use the links provided in the photo captions on this page to locate digital repositories of archaeological sources. What individual or organisation has created each repository?
- What methods for investigating the ancient past are described in the section Archaeology and science and the link provided?
- Visit the web page River boats <https://annaciddor.com/river-boats/>
- What different categories of primary sources which are not texts are mentioned and illustrated on this page? What different methods for investigating the ancient past have brought this evidence to light?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES

AC: Identify the origin, content, context and purpose of historical sources

- Visit the web page How I found out about the past <https://annaciddor.com/how-i-found-out-about-the-past/>
 - What different types of written primary sources are mentioned?
 - How would each of these texts differ in terms of their content, context and purpose?
 - What limitations would each have as a source of information about the past?
 - Which do you think would be most valuable as historical sources and why?

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES AND INTERPRETATIONS

AC: Identify perspectives, attitudes and values of the past in sources

- Visit the web page Religion and beliefs <https://annaciddor.com/religion-and-beliefs/>

What do the images and symbols in the primary sources shown on this page tell us about Roman beliefs and attitudes about gods and goddesses and their roles in divine and human life?

COMMUNICATING

AC: Create descriptions, explanations and historical arguments, using historical knowledge, concepts and terms that reference evidence from sources

- Use the link to photos of Roman objects and images in the Verulamium Museum, given under the heading 'Roman buildings' on the web page How I found out about the past <https://annaciddor.com/how-i-found-out-about-the-past/>

Write a description of what a room in a Roman house would have looked like, including objects you might find in it, referring to this evidence.

ASSESSMENT:

- Write your own short story in which you travel back in time to the Roman Empire. Describe what you see and experience. Provide a list of resources you have used. You can refer to the web page Tamara's Secrets <https://annaciddor.com/tamaras-secrets/> and links on that site to assist you.

LATIN YEARS 7 AND 8

ENGAGING WITH TEXTS

AC: Convey information about the daily life and attitudes of the Romans

- Use Chapter 34 to gather information about life in the Roman world, including family life, food and hygiene. Present this information in a poster or digital display, using words in Latin to label as many elements as you can.
- Recreate a Roman feast, using recipes from *Apicius* (which the author used as the basis of the meal in Chapter 34). An English translation of the whole text can be found here: <http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/e/roman/texts/apicius/home.html>
- The Latin text can be found here (note the numbering of recipes differs in parts from the translation text): https://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost04/Apicius/api_re00.html
- Recreate a Roman school day, with composition of speeches like those made by the school boys in Chapter 4. Use the web page The Boy Who Stepped Through Time secrets: School <https://annaciddor.com/tamaras-secrets/school/>
- What different indoor and outdoor spaces in a Roman home (house, villa or farm) are mentioned in the novel *A Message Through Time*? What are they used for?
- Examine the Roman artefacts from Pompeii and elsewhere in the web page Religion and beliefs <https://annaciddor.com/religion-and-beliefs/> What do they reveal about the everyday lives of the Romans?

- Chapter 40 depicts the festival of Lemuria (May 9, 11, 13) and Chapter 50 a festival of Mercury (May 15). Refer to the web page Religion and beliefs <https://annaciddor.com/religion-and-beliefs/> for further information.

What are the main differences between the rituals and practices of each of these two festivals?

What Latin writer was used for Chapter 40? Investigate this writer and his works.

UNDERSTANDING

AC: Translate Latin texts, applying knowledge of vocabulary and syntax and linguistic and cultural clues

- All the names used in the novel are real Roman or Gaulish names from Roman inscriptions or texts, or were found stamped on plates and bowls made in Roman Gaul. The name of the character Carotus, which is from a pottery stamp, is probably a Gaulish version of 'Dear one' in Latin. What Latin verb is this derived from?

Find out more about the name of the boat captain Anatolius on the web page River boats <https://annaciddor.com/river-boats/>

- What does Furia's name mean? Do you think it suits her?

AC: Understand concepts of syntax in Latin sentences, including parts of speech

- In Chapter 4, Felix finds himself talking Latin. What are the two Latin words he says on page 20, and what do they mean in English?
- The phrase is taken from a 4th century Roman phrasebook. What is an alternative word order which could be used in Latin? How can you tell what the phrase means in Latin, regardless of the word order?
- What part of speech is 'me'? What form of the verb is 'sequere'?

AC: Understand and apply the principles of pronunciation for the reading of Latin texts

- How should these Latin words in the book be pronounced:
 - Ave
 - Avennio
 - Me
 - Jupiter
 - Vale

AC: Understand that Latin spread with the expansion of the Roman empire, developed over time into the Romance languages, and influenced English vocabulary

- Where and when do Felix and Zoe go back in time? Look at the map on pages viii–ix and locate the towns and cities on a modern map. Why do the people they encounter there speak in Latin?

- In Chapter 45 Felix uses the word 'dinosaur' and in Chapter 24, Zoe mentions 'hypothermia'. Look at the web page Time travel secrets <https://annaciddor.com/time-travel-secrets/> to find out more about these 'New Latin' words. What is New Latin, and how and why is it used?
- Felix and Zoe must use the Latin word 'Vale', meaning 'goodbye', to return to their own time. This is a form of the Latin verb 'valere' meaning 'to be strong' or 'to be well'.
 - Discuss as a class how the word 'vale' is formed from this verb and what it means.
 - Use a dictionary to find as many English words derived from this Latin root as you can.
 - In Chapter 52, Petronia meets another Roman girl her own age. What is this girl's name and how does it relate to the word 'vale'? Why do you think Roman parents might choose to call their daughter by this name?
- What does Felix's name mean in Latin? What are some English derivatives of this word?

AC: Reflect on own and others' reactions to and assumptions about the language and culture of Roman society, considering similarities and differences to own language and culture

- What assumptions cause the main cultural gaps and conflicts between the modern Zoe and the Roman girl, Petronia?
- Describe your life at home and compare this to Petronia's life.
- In Chapters 6 to 12, the young Roman girl, Petronia, is brought into modern times. How does she view the lives and behaviour of Zoe and Felix? Does she prefer her own life in the past or theirs in the future? Why? Do you agree?

ASSESSMENT:

- Create an image of a Roman bathhouse, town house or villa. Write names of the main rooms or spaces in Latin, and describe what they could be used for (note that Roman rooms could have more mixed or flexible use than ours).
- Provide a list of resources you have used. You can refer to the web page Tamara's Secrets <https://annaciddor.com/tamaras-secrets/> and links on that site to assist you.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anna Ciddor has always been fascinated by the past. It would be her dream come true to step through time! Instead, she immerses herself in research and hunts out the tiniest details so she can bring the past to life in her imagination – and in her books. Anna is based in Melbourne, Australia, but her research quests have led her across the world. She has hunted for druids in Ireland, Vikings in Norway, and her grandmother's childhood in Poland. She has also visited Arles and the Rhône region in southern France, where *A Message Through Time* is set.

Anna's work has won her many accolades, including the Nance Donkin Award for Children's Literature, a grant from the Australia Council, Notable Book awards from the Children's Book Council of Australia, and shortlistings for numerous other awards. Some of her best-loved books include *Runestone*, *The Family with Two Front Doors*, and *The Boy Who Stepped Through Time*.

To find out more, visit <https://annaciddor.com/>

ABOUT THE RESEARCHER AND AUTHOR OF THESE NOTES

Tamara Lewit has a doctorate from the Institute of Archaeology in London. She is an Honorary Fellow in the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies at the University of Melbourne, and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, London. She has taught history and archaeology for nearly 40 years and has published many research papers on the later Roman Empire. During the writing of the novel, she had the privileged position of participating in the plot planning and creative process with the author, reading each chapter as it was written, as well as unearthing the historical material. This gave her the perfect vantage point from which to present these teaching notes.

CORRESPONDING LITERATURE

The Boy Who Stepped Through Time by Anna Ciddor

52 Mondays by Anna Ciddor

The Family with Two Front Doors by Anna Ciddor

Night of the Fifth Moon by Anna Ciddor

Prisoner of Quentaris by Anna Ciddor

Stormriders, Book 3 in the Viking Magic series by Anna Ciddor

Wolfspell, Book 2 in the Viking Magic series by Anna Ciddor

Runestone, Book 1 in the Viking Magic series by Anna Ciddor

Time Travel Diaries series by Caroline Lawrence

Roman Mystery Scrolls series by Caroline Lawrence (ages 7+)

Roman Mysteries series by Caroline Lawrence (middle fiction to young adult)

ADDITIONAL LINKS AND RESOURCES

Additional information about using historical sources, contrasts between past and present, Roman life and religion, Latin, Roman children, games and school, with many additional links can be found at <https://annaciddor.com/tamaras-secrets/>

Map of Roman Empire

An animated map of the growth of the Empire can be found here:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Roman_Empire_map.ogv

Roman mapping website

Modern place-names can be entered in 'ab' (from) and 'ad' (to), and 'ostendere' will map the route using the 4th century Roman map known as the Peutinger Table, which the researcher used to work out the characters' journeys between Arelate and Avennio. The route is shown with official staging posts (Roman and modern names) and the distances between them in Roman miles (note that distances in France north of Lyon are given in leagues, which measured 2.2 km). A zoomable image of the entire Roman map can be found on the second tab of the website <https://omnesviae.org/>

3D reconstructions

- Bathhouse of the Emperor Diocletian in Rome, produced by the National Roman Museum: <https://youtu.be/9ZiTtEIS5I>
- Reconstruction video of villa in Gaul: <https://youtu.be/tlmfqDyiYPg>

- Reconstruction video of a Roman house created by Museum Victoria:
<https://youtu.be/gDiqKUzSeZM>
- Reconstruction video of recently excavated food shop at Pompeii:
<https://youtu.be/QaCJHVP2bP8>
- Household objects: <https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/eneroma3d>

Accurate reconstruction drawings of Roman Gaul

<https://jeanclaudegolvin.com/en/project/gaul/>

3D scans of museum objects

Arles museum: <https://sketchfab.com/museearlesantique/models>

Image albums

www.romanports.org

<https://followinghadrian.com/>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/carolemage/albums>

<https://pompeiiinpictures.com/pompeiiinpictures/>

Food

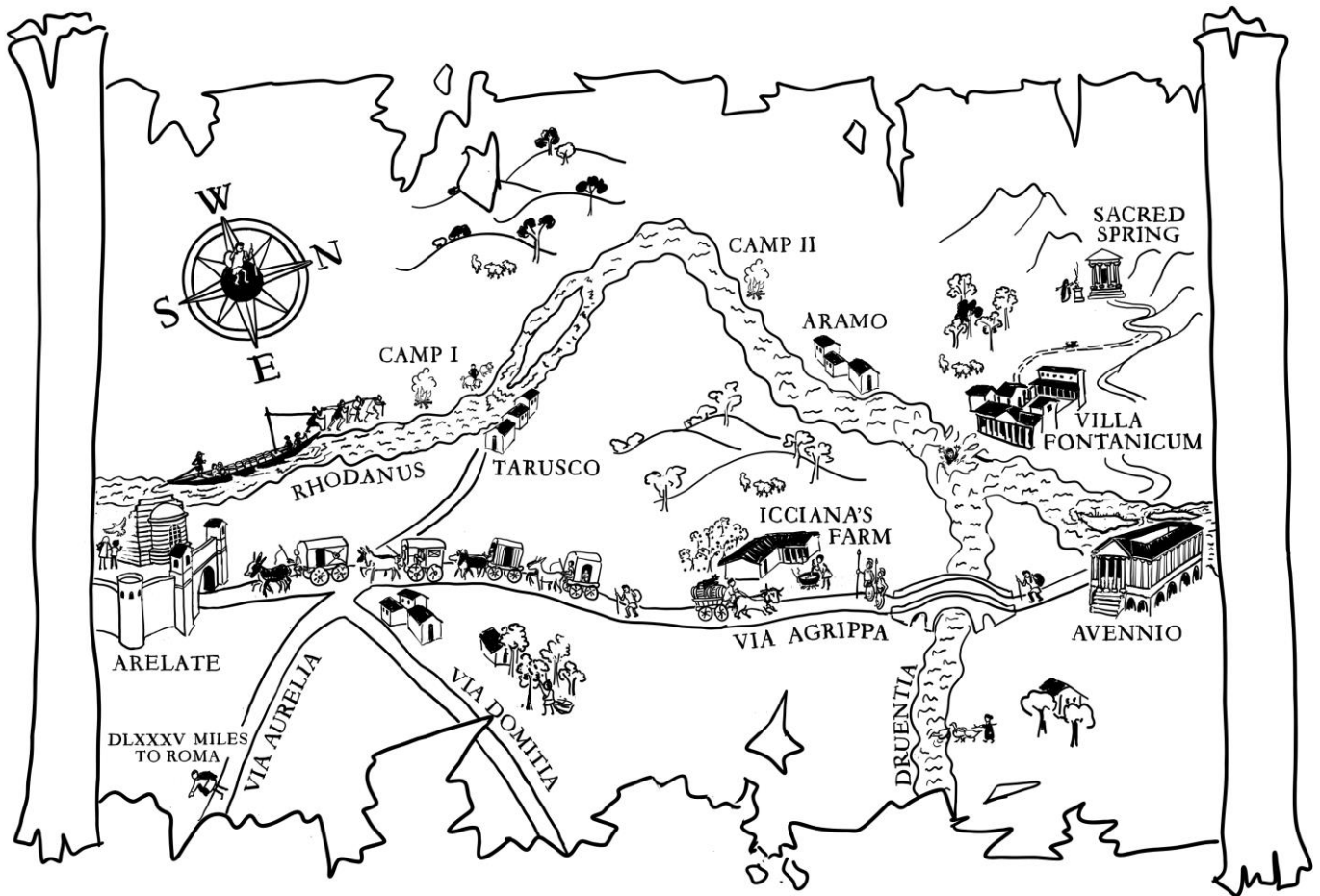
- FAQs and answers about Roman food (Getty Museum):
https://blogs.getty.edu/iris/what-did-ancient-romans-eat/?fbclid=IwAR2OZJ_t9Tth47FKcsMjt4cHS2u7cg7V2emOI-t8rviQpcdYp0MaPI4EPiY
- Apicius' recipes (primary source collection of recipes, probably collated in around the 4th century CE):
<http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/e/roman/texts/apicius/home.html>

WORKSHEETS

Worksheet I Map of the route from Arelate to Avennio, from *A Message Through Time* by Anna Ciddor (2023)

Use the glossary to translate the ancient town and river names into English.

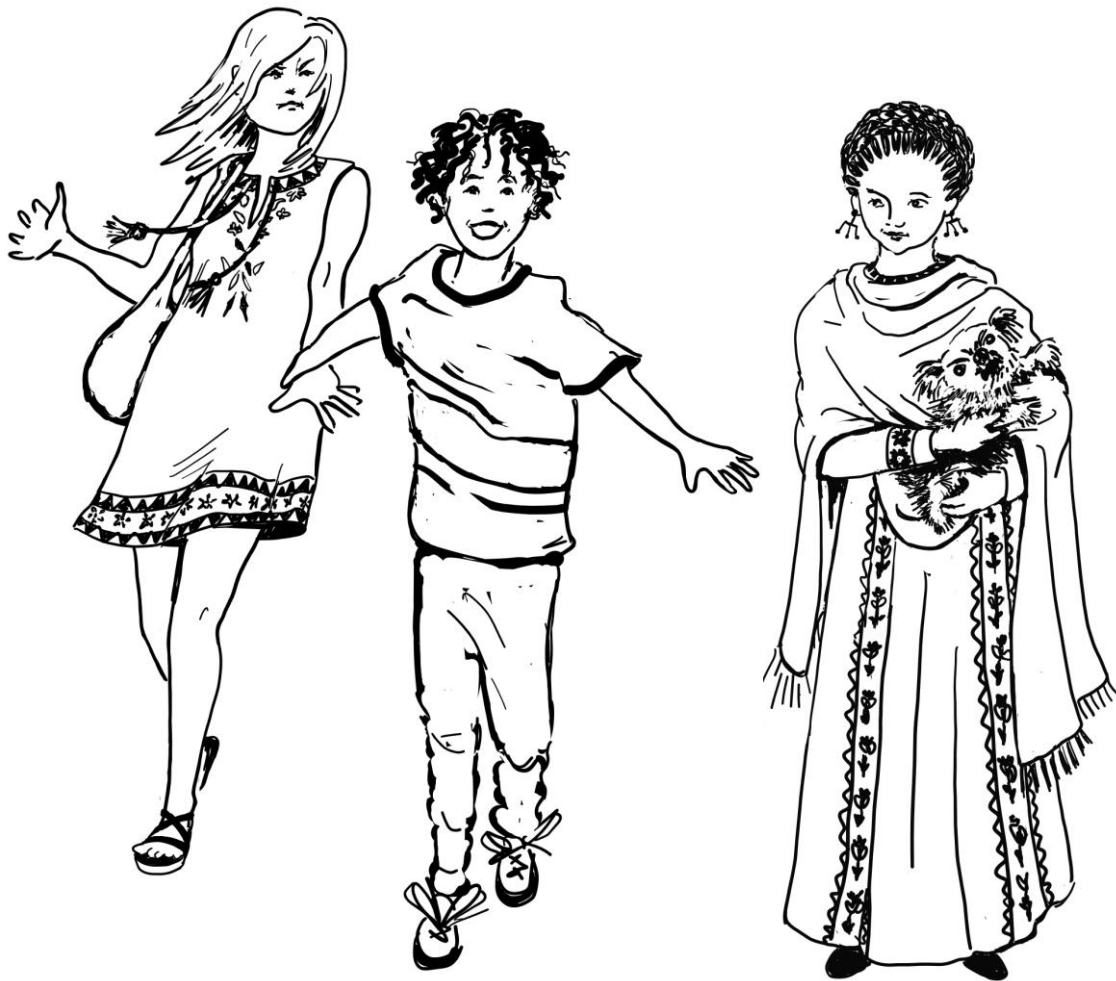
Find the man pointing to Roma (Rome). Write the distance in modern numerals.



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Worksheet 2 Colouring Sheet 1

**Zoe, Felix, Petronia and her dog, Furia, illustration by Anna Ciddor from
A Message Through Time by Anna Ciddor (2023)**



HINTS FOR COLOURING CHILDREN CORRECTLY:**Colours mentioned in the story – or choose your own, using the notes below**

- Zoe, the modern girl: pink dress, fair hair, brown bag
- Felix, the modern boy: fluoro green laces on his runners
- Furia, the dog: brown, white and black fur
- Petronia, the ancient Roman girl: dark yellow dress, red decoration on her mantle (shawl)

Notes on colours from Roman times

- Wealthier Romans, and their well-dressed slaves, wore strong colours such as cherry red, strong green, pink, and bright yellow. Red was especially popular for children's clothes or their decoration.
- Mantles and decoration were usually in contrasting colours.
- Leather bags and shoes could be natural brown, or also dyed in colours such as red or yellow.

The figures can be cut out and laminated as on the 'Make a book display' example on this web page <https://annaciddor.com/books-by-anna-ciddor/the-boy-who-stepped-through-time/>

Worksheet 3 Colouring Sheet 2

Street scene in Roman Arelate, illustration by Anna Ciddor from *A Message Through Time* by Anna Ciddor (2023)



HINTS FOR COLOURING STREET SCENE CORRECTLY

- The lower parts of buildings and columns: often coloured dark red
- Roof tiles, bowls and jugs: orange-red terracotta
- Clothes of shoppers and girls playing knucklebones: red, green or yellow
- Clothes of poor people: undyed cream or brown wool
- Cart: made of wood
- Turnips the boy is selling in his basket: white, cream or yellow

Worksheet 4 Bonus Activity

In the author's illustration of a street scene in Arelate, see if you can find the following:

1. A mule pulling a cart
2. A shop selling pottery
3. Girls playing with sheep's knucklebones
4. Someone selling turnips (popular in early spring when no other vegetables were ripe)
5. A beggar
6. A poor youth wearing a ragged tunic
7. A wealthier man wearing a decorated tunic and cloak
8. Someone who lives in a small apartment over their shop



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