



What Have The Romans Done For Us?

What have the Romans ever done for us? It's a fair question. The Romans commanded England for a little under 400 years, but they left a permanent mark on the country. You may not realise it, but lots of the things you see around you today were inspired by our ancient invaders. Between their invasion in 43AD and their departure in 410AD, they introduced a lot.

Before the Romans invaded, most people in Britain travelled around on muddy roads. They were often so poorly maintained that they would damage carts. The Romans soon fixed that by building over 10,000 miles of road. They used good quality stone and built them so well that some are still there to this day!

The Romans were a clever bunch and knew that it was much quicker to travel in a straight line. They built their roads in straight lines as often as possible, something that we still try to do today with our busy main roads.

Do you remember when nobody could write and you had to pass on information orally? Of course not. That's because the Romans brought over their language: Latin. Before that, people would have to rely on telling each other things, but thanks to the Romans your teachers can now expect you to write pages of information!

Even 2,000 years ago, Romans needed feeding. At one point there were 10,000 soldiers in Britain and they wanted food to eat quickly. Enter fast-food! Roman cities were filled with food-stalls where soldiers could pick up a quick bite to eat. They even gave us the burger! Don't worry, it wasn't all unhealthy food. The Romans also brought us apples, pears and peas.

Traders in Roman cities would often advertise themselves with billboards and by stamping their name on products. We can thank the Romans for all of the advertising and branding we see everywhere now!

One thing the Romans valued was cleanliness. They introduced the idea of



sewers and clean water via their aqueducts. They brought over the idea of baths and public toilets. It's just a shame that we'd forgotten this by the time the Middle Ages rolled around.

Before our Italian invasion, most settlements were no bigger than large villages. The Romans were big fans of larger towns. They gave us the idea of a well-planned town centre. You benefit from this every time you take a trip into your hometown to shop.

Imagine a year without 365 days. You can't, can you? The Roman Julian calendar was the first to count a year as 365 days. They even had a leap year every four years. We liked it so much, we kept it and adapted it to form the Gregorian calendar that we still use today. Even the names of our months were originally Roman.

This is just a small number of things that the Romans left behind. We can't forget that they also gave us: currency; endless paperwork; architecture; numbers; London and lots of other useful things that we couldn't live without.



VOCABULARY FOCUS

1. When did the Romans invade Britain?
2. How many soldiers were in Britain?
3. Which language did the Romans bring to Britain?
4. What was the name of the Roman calendar?
5. How did Romans bring clean water into towns?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

V

Which word or phrase has a definition closest to "look after"?

E

In the sentence that starts "They used good quality...", why has the author ended with an exclamation mark?

V

Which word or phrase means to tell somebody something with your voice?

S

Why did Romans build their roads in straight lines?

E

How did the Romans change how we pass on information?