

Verulamium Audio Guide Teacher Resource Pack

Below are the key points of content and comprehension the students will learn from each track, as well as some possible discussion points. They can also be accessed via the QR code after your trip to support the students' learning once back at school.

We recommend using this resource before your trip to ensure students are prompted to make sure they listen to those tracks which most closely align with the focuses of your syllabus.

You may wish to use the suggested points for discussion during your gallery time to deepen student engagement, but they will work just as well back in the classroom as part of a reflective or follow-up activity.

It is not necessary for the students to listen to all the tracks, or to listen in any particular order.

The clues to solve the code word are repeated across several tracks, so provided that the students engage with approximately one third of them as a minimum (which amounts to approximately 15 minutes of listening across the allotted hour in the gallery) they should be well able to crack the code.

Trigger Warnings

*** Tracks marked with a red asterisk have a trigger warning associated with them for sensitive material surrounding death**

These tracks and this area of the museum can be avoided without compromising a student's ability to complete the code word.

Practical Considerations

Whilst the museum has free Wi-Fi available, **we do not provide devices to access the audio guide.**

In order to engage with this resource, **please ensure all students have access to a fully charged internet-enabled device** (smart phone or tablet) and bring headphones with them unless you plan to work in groups using a shared device.

For students with hearing difficulties, who prefer to engage via text, or who do not have access to an internet enabled device, a limited number of transcripts are available at the museum front desk.

If you do not bring your own devices, please understand that your students will not be able to use this digital resource.



Access the audio tracks and the accompanying map of the gallery via the QR code.

<https://www.stalbansmuseums.org.uk/verulamium-audio-guide>

Expert in Your Pocket : - These tracks give a curatorial deep dive into some of the artefacts in our collection.

Track	Themes	Comprehension /Learning	Discussion Points
1. Boudicca's final stand	Boudicca's revolt; Tacitus; source analysis; Roman army	Possible location for the defeat of Boudicca. Roman battle tactics/weapons.	How strong do you think Duncan Mackay's evidence is?
2. Fascinus	Roman superstitions	What is the Evil Eye? How did the Romans defend against it?	Name 3 ways the Fascinus was used
3. Venus statue	Religious practises; goddess symbolism	Why there is doubt about which goddess is represented in the statue. How Venus is typically represented in statues. How statues were used in the home.	To what extent does the identity of the statue matter when trying to understand people's religious beliefs? What religious rituals did the Roman people undertake at home?
4. Amphorae	Trade and transport; Food and drink	How food and drink travelled in the Roman Empire.	How do you think the diet of a Celtic person in Verulamium would have changed after the Roman conquest?
5. Bone tools	Industry and Technology; Resources	How animal bone was utilised. Now and then - comparing resources and waste.	Do you think the Romans were more eco-friendly than us? Explain why.
6. History of pets	Pets; Wealth and Status;	The uses of dogs and cats in Roman Britain. How breeds developed over time. Pet ownership as a sign of wealth.	To what extent has dog and cat ownership changed since the Roman period?
7. Death trends across the Roman period *	Burial and Cremation; Beliefs in the Afterlife; Funerary Practices; Migration; Rise of Christianity	The different beliefs and burial practices in Verulamium due to migration and trends over time.	How do we know that death rituals and afterlife beliefs in Verulamium changed during the Roman period? (What might the changes to death rituals tell us about the beliefs of people living in Roman Verulamium?)
8. Moving a Mosaic	Mosaics and tesserae; Archaeology	How the archaeologists moved the mosaics to the museum during the excavations in the 1930s and 1950s.	Both methods for moving a mosaic causes damage to varying extents. Considering this, should they have been left in the ground instead after being recorded? Why/why not?
9. Lion and Stag Mosaic	Mosaics	How mosaics were made.	Design a mosaic floor featuring an animal. How are you going to make sure it all fits?

People of Verulamium: These recordings are theatrical pieces imagining who may have owned, made or used the artefacts in our collection.

Track	Key Content	Comprehension/Learning	Discussion Points
1 Celtic impression of the Forum	Roman conquest; difference in building styles; Impacts of Roman rule ;Boudicca and Rebellion; Latin	How the Roman conquest impacted the Celtic population in their everyday life (taxes, language, buildings.)	Translate the Latin inscription into English. Why would the Roman invaders want to create an impression through their buildings?
2 Oyster Seller	Trade and Transport; Food	How food travelled around the Roman Empire. Oysters as a cheap, readily available snack food. How popular British oysters were across the Empire.	Explain how oysters were kept fresh during transport.
3 Sheep farming	Farming	Development of farming techniques. Importance of wool.	To what extent do changes in sheep breeds demonstrate the Romans had an understanding of genetics?
4 Teenage experience of death *	Funerary Practices; High Death Rate; Remembrance and Festivals; Adulthood and Masculinity.	How Romans honour and remember ancestors and deceased family members. Different death rituals/laws for different age groups and wealth. How a teenage boy can become 'man of the house' if father passes.	A Roman child would have experienced loss at an early age. Why do you think the death rate was higher in Roman times?
5 Unequal pay	Diocletian; Pay; Teaching	A Rhetoric teacher is paid more than a Maths teacher.	What do differences in pay tell us about what the Roman world valued? (Should a drama teacher be paid more than a maths teacher? Why/why not?)
6 Drunk Graffiti	Humour; Latin; Archaeology	How artefacts can tell us stories about people from the past. Roman literacy.	What can this cup tell us about the owner?
7 An Acting Career	Theatre; Jobs; Citizenship; Status of actors then and now	How acting was seen as a degrading job and often paid badly, even affecting your citizenship.	Compare the way actors are viewed today to the Roman period. What does this tell us about society?
8 Fashionable Women	Fashion and makeup; Women; Trade; Coins and Iconography	How fashion styles, trends and items travelled around the Empire. How fashion can convey status and wealth.	Why would the fashionable woman be looking at a coin for a fashionable hairstyle?
9 Cooking for Romans	Food and Drink; Cooking; Trade and Transport; Romanisation	What food the people of Verulamium were eating and how it evolved after the Roman conquest.	Using the track, list three things we still eat that the Romans introduced to Britain.

Diary of Helen Carlton-Smith: - These recordings are taken from the diary of Helen, a teenager who volunteered on the excavations of Verulamium in the 1930s. Her diaries give an insight into life on the dig, archaeological techniques of the day and working alongside Tessa Wheeler.

Track	Key Content	Comprehension/Learning	Discussion Points
1. Temple excavations	Place of worship; Religious Rituals; Layout of a Temple; Artefacts; Death and Burial	Details of the excavation of a Temple in Verulamium, featuring description of layout and artefacts found that may have been used in rituals.	What can we tell about how the Romans worshipped based on the things found during the excavation?
2. Baby skeletons *	Death and Burial; Infant Mortality, Archaeology	A high number of baby skeletons were found during the excavations, when excavating houses. Roman law stated that infants under 40 days old could not be buried in a cemetery, so babies were usually buried at home.	Why were babies buried at home? What does this suggest about Roman attitudes to infant death?
3. Samian pottery	Trade and Transport; Wealth and Status; Archaeology	Samian ware was essentially fancy Roman table ware made in the 1 st – 3 rd century and imported from Gaul (France). It has a shiny red finish, achieved by applying a ‘slip’ of clay and water and then fired. It was often richly decorated with mythological scenes, animals, flowers or gladiators, by putting the pot inside a mould or using a stamp.	Where did Samian ware come from? Tessa gives Helen pottery from the excavations to take home. What does that suggest about how pottery was viewed by the excavation?
4. Finding a mosaic	Roman and Celtic gods; Archaeology	Description of the Sea God mosaic. Initially, archaeologists believed it was a woodland god Cernunnos. Now we lean towards it being a sea god like Neptune or Oceanus due to other comparable depictions of these gods in other mosaics/ artwork. Finding a Celtic god on a mosaic would be incredibly rare so it is more likely to be a Roman god.	Archaeologists don’t agree about who is featured on this mosaic. Who do you think it is? Why?
5. Sunray/ Shell mosaic	Archaeology; Mosaics	Description of the excavation of the Shell mosaic, which was found with a tree growing over the top of it.	This mosaic survived a tree growing on it. What does that tell us about Roman mosaic building techniques?
6. Wall plaster	Archaeology techniques;	Wall plaster is found in the excavation of villas on the floor, having detached from the wall and fallen as whole panels.	Are you surprised that Helen was allowed to wash the wall plaster? Why/ why not?
7. Coins	Coins; Emperors; Archaeology	Description of excavating coins from the 3rd and 4th century, featuring Emperor Julian and Emperor Tetricus.	What can coins tell us about the past?
8. Bones	Archaeology	Description of excavating several artefacts including animal and human bones.	What can the discovery of various animal bones tell us about Roman settlements?