



One of the most effective weapons used by the Roman army was the sling bullet (or slingshot). Romans slings were made from a length of rope with a small cradle to hold the bullet. The sling was swung around to generate speed, and the bullet was fired when one end of the rope was released.

A soldier who specialized in this type of missile was called a *funditor*. *Funditores* were lightly armed so that they could move quickly around the battlefield, and they carried their sling bullets in front of them in the folds of their cloaks.

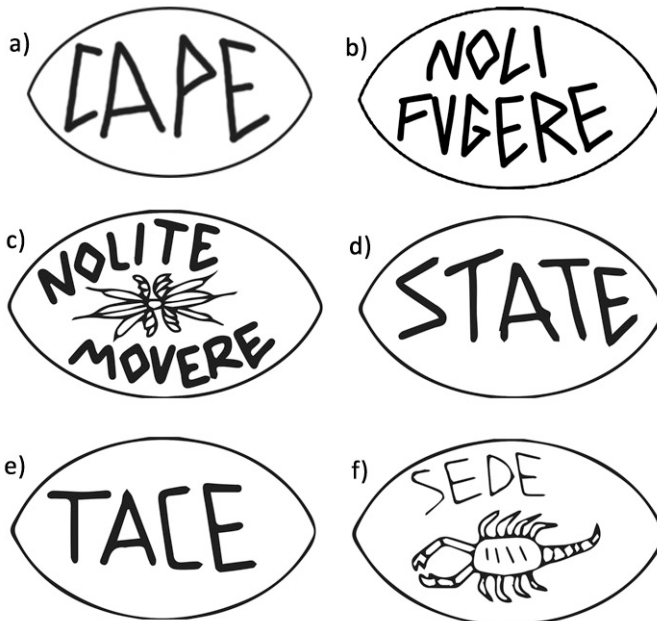
Roman sling bullets were roughly the same weight as a modern golf ball, but were lemon-shaped. A good *funditor* could fire his slingshot several hundred metres.

Bullies with Bullets

Sometimes Roman soldiers wrote messages for the enemy on their sling bullets. They did this by scratching letters backwards inside the hollow moulds which were filled with clay or lead. When the bullets were turned out of the moulds, the messages could be read the right way around. As you'd expect, the messages weren't usually very polite, but they could be quite funny. Often these insults use the imperative.

Exercise 1:

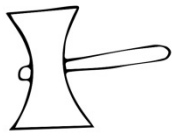
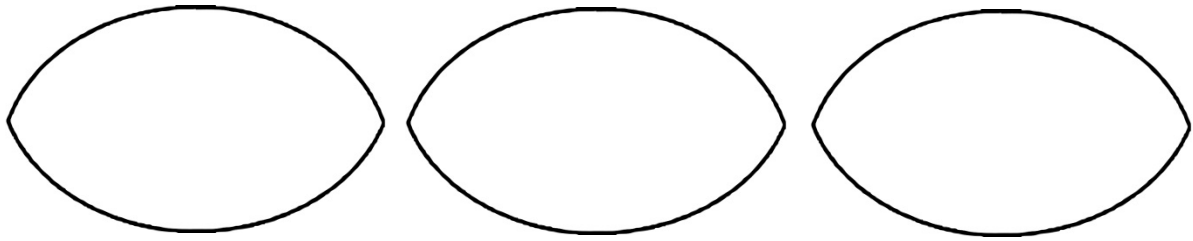
What do these sling bullets tell the enemy to do? [6 marks]



- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____
- e) _____
- f) _____

Exercise 2:

Design your own sling bullets, using the imperative and an authentic Roman design [6 marks].



AXE



SPEAR TIP



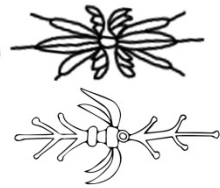
SNAKE



BEE



SCORPION



THUNDERBOLT

Vocab ideas:

abeo, abire, abii, abitum – go away
capio, capere, cepi, captum – catch
caveo, cavere, cavi, cautum – beware
curro, currere, cucurri, cursum – run
fugio, fugere, fugi, fugitum – run away
lacrimo, lacrimare, lacrimavi, lacrimatum – cry
moveo, movere, movi, motum – move
munio, munire, munivi, munitus – defend
sedeo, sedere, sedi, sessum – sit down
sto, stare, steti, statum – stand still

Exercise 3:

You are Roman legionaries, and your teacher is your *praefectus*. You have 5 minutes to become familiar with these orders. When the time is up, put away this sheet and stand up. The last person to follow the order issued by the *praefectus*, must suffer *gradus deiectio* (loss of rank) and is out. The last person left standing wins, and is promoted to *Primus Pilus* (senior centurion).

destringite! – Draw your sword!
recondite! – Sheath your sword!
pila iacite! – Throw your spear!
procedite! – Forward march!
consistite! Halt!

animum attendite! – Pay attention!
scuta tollite! – Raise your shield!
vallate! – Dig a trench!
ad tergum vertite! – About turn!
testudinem facite! – Make a tortoise!