When we think of famous Romans, we often only remember one of their names. In fact, Roman citizen men often had three names, and citizen women had two.

Parents of a Roman boy combined three elements to make his full name:

1. **praenomen**: a simple, common name like Marcus, Quintus or Publius. When writing down a praenomen, most Romans only gave the first letter or two.
2. **nomen**: a clan name, like a modern surname.
3. **cognomen**: a nickname to show which particular branch of the clan he belonged to. In Rome, many important people shared the same nomen, so it was important to have a distinctive cognomen. A cognomen might describe what that branch of the family was like, or might be the name of the place they originally came from:

   e.g. L. Caecilius Iucundus  
   *Lucius Caecilius-Delightful branch*

   M. Egnatius Rufus  
   *Marcus Egnatius-Redhead branch*

   Q. Roscius Gallus  
   *Quintus Roscius-Gaul branch*

A. Name a Roman

Try inventing some Roman names by choosing a praenomen, nomen, and cognomen from each column, e.g. M. Flavius Domitianus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>praenomen</th>
<th>nomen</th>
<th>cognomen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M. (Marcus)</td>
<td>Aemilius</td>
<td>Brutus (unreasonable)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. (Lucius)</td>
<td>Clodius</td>
<td>Domitianus (home-loving)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. (Quintus)</td>
<td>Flavius</td>
<td>Columbanus (dove)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. (Gaius)</td>
<td>Hortensius</td>
<td>Maximus (greatest)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. (Decimus)</td>
<td>Lucretius</td>
<td>Vitalis (full of life)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. (Aulus)</td>
<td>Pomponius</td>
<td>Lentulus (slow)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ti. (Tiberius)</td>
<td>Valerius</td>
<td>Bibulus (drunk)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. Reading Latin Inscriptions

You are going to see some pictures of real Latin inscriptions. Can you read the names that have been highlighted?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

C. Choose Your own Roman name:

What would your Roman name be?

You could use your first name for your praenomen, and your surname for your nomen (just add –us or –ius to make them sound a bit more Latin).

Then choose a cognomen. Some suggestions are given below, but if you have a Latin dictionary or textbook, you might be able to find an adjective for yourself:

- Civilis (polite)
- Crassus (solid)
- Felix (lucky)
- Memor (with a good memory)
- Magnus (tall, great)
- Gregorius (sociable)
- Paullus (small)
- Albinus (pale)
- Pulcher (handsome)
- Tacitus (silent)

D. Quis est? Who is it?

Try to invent 5 more Roman names. You could try characters from books or famous people. See if other people can guess who they are:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.