



# THE TIME TRAVEL DIARIES

CAROLINE LAWRENCE

## TEACHERS' NOTES FOR KS2 TEACHERS

### INTRODUCTION

This Resource Pack is designed for children aged 7–11. It is based on *The Time Travel Diaries* by Caroline Lawrence and invites pupils to unleash their inner historians and archaeologists. The lessons included will guide pupils through the process of archaeological discovery and historical observation. They will use Alex's journey back in time, beginning at the Roman Temple of Mithras – to give them the skills to record and interpret evidence in order to inform their understanding of the past.

**We hope they enjoy the journey!**



## ABOUT THE BOOK

From the million-copy-selling author of *The Roman Mysteries* comes a nail-biting time-travel adventure in Roman London – where past meets present.

*Billionaire Solomon Daisy is obsessed with the skeleton of a blue-eyed African girl from Roman London. When his tech guys accidentally invent a time machine he decides to send London schoolboy Alex Papas on a mission. Time travel is easier for kids, and Alex knows Greek and a little Latin. The portable portal is placed in London's Mithraeum, recently relocated back to its original 3rd century AD site. Now all Alex has to do is go through and find the blue-eyed girl.*

*There are just three rules:*

- 1. Naked you go and naked you must return.*
- 2. Drink, don't eat.*
- 3. As little interaction as possible.*

*But time travel is no fun fair, and there are more ways to die in Roman London than Alex could have guessed.*



# LESSON ONE HISTORY: IT'S A PUZZLE

*Notes for teachers: this task is designed to help children explore what they can learn from a group of objects. Each pupil in the class should be provided with a single piece from a larger jigsaw (one that they haven't seen).*

## Lead-in questions:

Take a good look at your small jigsaw piece. Answer the following questions:

- What can you tell from your piece?
- What questions would you like to ask to find out more?

Swap your piece with the person next to you and repeat the activity. Share your ideas with the class to try to discover what the bigger picture might be on the jigsaw.

## Task 1:

Read the extract from page 17 of *The Time Travel Diaries*.

*Frankly the ruins looked a bit dull. Just a big stone rectangle, a dirt floor and a curved bit at the far end.*

*Crazy Daisy pointed over the glass barrier to the far end of the temple foundations, where a big semicircular pane of glass showed a man in a floppy hat and fluttering cloak stabbing a bull. The way the lights shone made the figure glow against the black wall beyond.*

*'That etching of Mithras,' said Solomon Daisy, 'is meant to suggest the cult statue. Experts think the statue was plaster and only the head was marble.'*

*'The bull's not very big, is it?' I said. 'More like a big dog than a bull . . . Also, he's not even looking at it.'*

*Daisy nodded. 'It's a puzzle,' he agreed. 'There are over two hundred representations of Mithras killing the bull, all more or less like that. But we know almost nothing about the cult of Mithras or what his followers did in a temple like this. It's as if we had images of a man on a cross but no New Testament to tell us what Christianity was all about.'*

As Alex admits here, much of what remains of history is now 'a puzzle'. Archaeologists and historians have to piece together clues to form a picture about what life was like in the past. Imagine your classroom is an archaeological jigsaw. What objects can you see that might help people in the future form a picture of what life was like today?



## Task 2:

Draw a picture of yourself in the clothes that you are wearing. Include any objects that you have with you, for example a pencil case.

### Archaeological Picture of Me



### Task 3:

From the drawing make a list of all the things that might survive 2000 years into the future (skeleton, plastic buttons, metal zips). Choose six things and write down what a person in the future might learn from them. Use the table below to organise your ideas.

Use the website <http://case.londonmithraeum.com/> to find out more about the Mithraeum Case that inspired Caroline Lawrence to write *The Time Travel Diaries*. You can click on each of the images to find out a little bit more about some of the objects that were discovered at the site!

Can you use these images to put together the pieces of the puzzle and create a picture of what life was like in Roman London?

OBJECT	WHAT PEOPLE IN THE FUTURE MIGHT LEARN
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	





# LESSON TWO AN INTRODUCTION TO ROMAN LONDON

## Lead-in questions:

- What do you know of the Romans? What do you know of Roman London?

## Task 1:

**DID YOU KNOW:** Latin was the dominant language used by the Romans, but in the entire Roman world, Greek was actually the lingua franca. That's why the New Testament is in Greek not Latin.

After a few hours, Alex discovers his modern Greek is more useful than the few words of Latin he learned in Latin club. Still, Latin was spoken in Roman London.

Below are some words a time traveller might be advised to learn. Can you match them to their definition using the cards below?

You might also be able to use the context in which they are used in the book as you read! Keep a note of where you see them.

STELLA	MAGIA	DOMINUS
GLADIUS	CULTER	PONS
TAURUS	PASTILLUM	PATER

MAGIC	MASTER	FATHER
STAR	BRIDGE	KNIFE
SWORD	BULL	LITTLE ROUND LOAF

## Extension:

Can you think of any modern English words that come from the Latin words? E.G. We get the word the word 'magic' from MAGIA, and 'pastille' from PASTILLUM.



## Task 2:

Read this short extract from page 41 of *The Time Travel Diaries* and answer the comprehension questions below.

*'Londinium is amazing.' Martin scratched his curly head. 'Everybody drives chariots and they all wear togas. You'll see soldiers marching and gladiators fighting. Oh, and here's how they shake hands.' He stretched out his right arm. When I went to shake it he said, 'No. Grab my forearm and I'll grab yours.'*

*'Oh yeah,' I said, grasping his arm just below the elbow.*

*'I think I've seen this in the movies.'*

*'That's right!' said Martin. 'It makes more sense than shaking hands,' he said, 'because you don't pass germs and viruses to people.'*

*I frowned. 'I thought ancient Romans didn't know about germs . . .'*

*Martin's smile vanished and he shrugged. 'Well, that's how they do it.'*

*'Do you have any practical advice for me?' I asked him. 'Like where to get clothes?'*

*'You'll find stuff in a room just inside the entrance of the temple,' said Martin. 'It's where the priests change. If you come through the portal during one of their ceremonies, stay hidden until it's over and they've gone. Don't make a peep. Even if you hear men cawing and roaring.'*

*I gave him a sharp look. 'Cawing and roaring?'*

*Martin nodded. 'Mithraism is a mystery cult and there are different levels, with a different avatar for each level, like the Raven, the Soldier –'*

*I interrupted. '– the Bridegroom, the Lion, the Persian, the Sun-Runner and the Father.' I had been reading up on what little was known about the cult.*

1. What does Martin think of 'Londinium'? What does Alex think? How are the two characters different?
2. List three things that you would see if you visited Londinium, according to Martin.
3. What is 'Mithraism'?
4. Can you find any evidence that Alex is quite 'practical'? What else can you infer about Alex?
5. Alex later finds out Martin was lying in this extract. Can you guess which things Martin might have been making up here? Find the answer on pages 119–120!

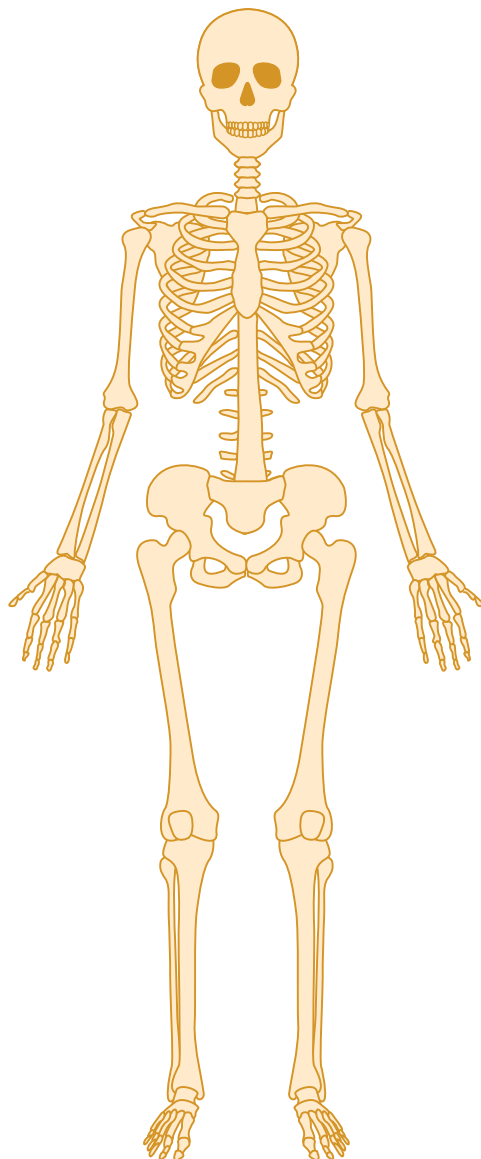


### Task 3:

In *The Time Travel Diaries*, Alex goes back in time to find the Lant Street Teen, the fourteen-year-old girl with the ivory knife. She is a real example of a Roman girl from London, whose bones were studied to find out more about the inhabitants of Roman cities. She is the author's main inspiration for the book!

Watch Dr Rebecca Redfern from the Museum of London explain the study of skeletons:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cyc0l40gWKM>.

As you listen, annotate the skeleton below with the different things it can tell us about the living person, such as age, sex, height, eye colour, health.



### Extension:

We know the Lant Street Teen was a girl of about fourteen years old, tall for her age, had blue eyes and also bad teeth (so probably bad breath) and bandy legs (so perhaps a limp). We know she grew up in the Southern Mediterranean, possibly North Africa. Sometimes we can also tell hair colour, ethnicity and whether the person was wounded or physically hurt. Can you come up with some different possible combinations of characteristics a Roman skeleton might have shown?





## Task 4:

Watch the video again. This time, make notes about the Lant Street Teen. What do you find out about her? Listen carefully and use the Profile below to help you.

### THE LANT STREET TEEN: PROFILE

SKETCH OF THE LANT STREET TEEN

WHERE SHE GREW UP:

WHERE SHE WAS BURIED:

WHAT SHE WAS BURIED WITH:

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

## Task 5:

Now it's time for you to do some detective work. Get up out of your seat and walk around the classroom. Ask other people about what they have learned about the Lant Street Teen and her life in Roman London. Make notes on your shared findings and report back to the class!



## LESSON THREE MAKING A DISCOVERY

*Notes for teachers: the aim of this lesson is to recreate the anticipation of the discovery of the remains of the Temple of Mithras, transporting children back to London AD 260. It might add excitement to turn part of the classroom into a pathway or tunnel leading to the site. To do this, place tables in a long row covered with cloth. At the end of the pathway, lay out objects, pictures or illustrations to represent the different treasures of the site – not too many, just enough to be sketched by four pupils at a time.*

### Lead-in questions:

- What would it feel like to discover a hidden treasure?
- What would it feel like to discover an ancient Roman Temple?

**DID YOU KNOW:** The Temple of Mithras is considered to be one of the most exceptional and important archaeological discoveries of the 20th Century in Britain. It was first discovered in 1954 by renowned archaeologist Professor W.F. Grimes during the excavations following the Blitz, but the subsequent reconstruction above a car park on Queen Victoria Street wasn't very successful.

Fifty years later, multi-millionaire Michael Bloomberg commissioned MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) to excavate and study the archaeology before the foundations of his new European headquarters were laid, and to work alongside a team of multi-disciplinary experts, from engineers to artists, to restore the Mithraeum to its original setting seven metres below modern ground level. Now curated and cared for by Bloomberg and known as London Mithraeum Bloomberg SPACE the newly restored temple boasts loads of beautifully exhibited artefacts and displays, plus a mysterious and immersive experience with lights, sound and mist.

The lead archaeologist managing the archaeological programme and consulting on the restoration was Sophie Jackson, who was nominated for Current Archaeology's Archaeologist of the Year in 2019.

The newly re-opened Mithraeum was one of Caroline Lawrence's main inspirations for the story. Find out more on her blog, here:

- <http://flavias.blogspot.com/2017/12/ten-things-you-probably-didnt-know.html>
- <http://flavias.blogspot.com/2018/05/interactive-mithras-by-caroline-lawrence.html>

### Task 1:

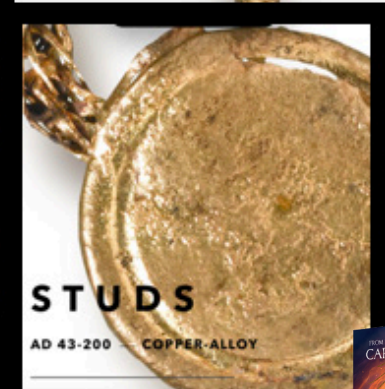
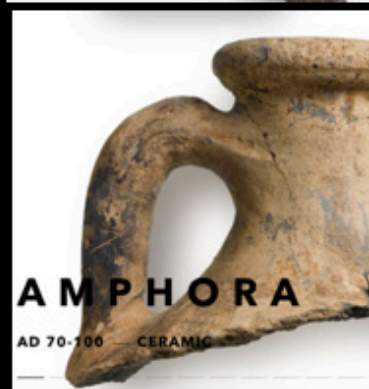
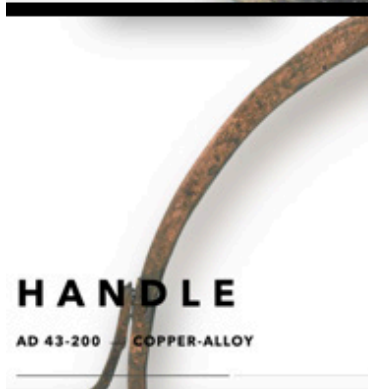
In this lesson you're going to step into Alex's shoes to become a curious time traveller! You're going to take part in a Reconstruction Relay. First, get into teams of four. Number each person in the group: 1, 2, 3 and 4.

When your number is called you must crawl along the passage until you come to the entrance of the Temple. You will then have 10 seconds to go into the Temple and sketch what you can see before the next member of your group has a turn.

After number 1 has been into the chamber and completed some sketches, you must decide as a group what the next person should focus on. Try to gather as much information as you can.



OBJECTS FOUND	SKETCHES OF OBJECTS	WHAT OBJECTS MIGHT HAVE BEEN USED FOR





## Task 2:

**Congratulations! You've made one of the biggest discoveries of ALL TIME. So big, in fact, that one of the curators from the Museum of London is coming to speak to you about what you've found.**

As a group you now need to collect all of the evidence that you have gathered and decide on some further questions to ask about each object that you have discovered.

## Task 3:

**Unfortunately the curator is running a little bit late. In pairs, can you try to find as many answers to your questions just by using books in the library or websites on the Internet? Share your findings with the whole class!**



## LESSON FOUR MY TIME TRAVEL DIARY

### Re-cap questions:

- How did you feel when you took part in last lesson's Reconstruction Relay?
- How did your emotions change throughout the task?

### Task 1:

Read the extract below about the moment Alex travels back in time for the first time.

*First of all, I had forgotten there would be a step down. When the ground wasn't where I expected it to be I fell forward, landing hard on my hands and knees. For a long moment I couldn't breathe. Then at last my lungs remembered what to do and sucked in air. But the air was different. Colder. Damp. With a hint of burnt pine.*

*My body was fizzing inside and out. I could hear a high-pitched ringing in my ears. It felt less like a bad roller-coaster ride and more like I imagined 'the bends', that thing scuba divers get if they come up too fast.*

*As if the tingling on my skin and the squealing in my ears and the damp in my nose weren't bad enough, my eyes were glued shut like after a long sleep.*

*When I managed to prise them open I felt a jolt of panic.*

*I was blind.*

*They had sent me into the past naked as a newborn and blind as a bat!*

*Then I understood. It was dark because I was in a temple with no windows, designed to resemble a cave. As my eyes adjusted, I realised it wasn't pitch black but dark green, like being deep underwater. Straight ahead I could just make out the dim shape of a man in a floppy hat sitting on a bull.*

*It had worked! Solomon Daisy had sent me back to the Temple of Mithras, presumably in the year 260 ad or thereabouts. The tingling in my arms and legs was calming down and the ringing in my ears was beginning to fade.*

### Task 2:

Put the emotion cards below in order from 1–5 (1 being the emotion Alex feels the most and 5 being the emotion he feels the least). Pick out key words and phrases from the extract as evidence for your ideas.

OVERWHELMED	PANICKED	CURIOUS
ECSTATIC	AMAZED	

### Task 3:

Use the blank emotion card to add another feeling of your own.



## Task 4:

Can you match some of Alex's physical feelings on the cards below to various quotations and key words in the extract? Don't forget to add another physical feeling on the blank card!

**DIZZY**

**EYES STUCK  
TOGETHER**

**BREATHLESSNESS**

**TINGLY SKIN**

**RINGING IN HIS  
EARS (TINNITUS)**

## Extension:

Re-create Alex travelling back in time by dramatising his experience in pairs. Make sure you use body position, body language and facial expressions to convey how he is affected by his experience.





## Task 5:

Imagine that you have to write a diary entry after traveling back in time to make the amazing discovery of the Roman Temple of Mithras. Use your work from this lesson as well as your own experience in Lesson 3 to help you.

