

How to make a Roman Bulla.

If you were a child in Ancient Rome, you would have worn a 'bulla' to bring you luck and carry your coins.

The bulla may have contained a lucky charm and a coin. They were made from gold, bronze, lead or cloth.

This activity will show you how to make your own bulla. You can use your bulla as a purse to keep your special coins safe.

You will need :

- A piece of scrap material (large enough for a circle 20cm in diameter)
- String, wool, ribbon or even an old shoelace
- Paper
- Pen/pencil
- A hole punch or an adult who can help with making holes with scissors.

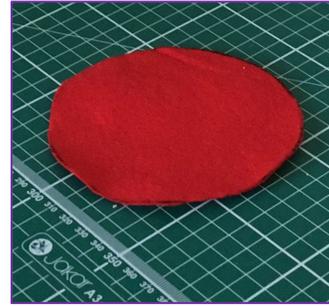


*Two gold bullae from Herculaneum.
1st century AD*

Instructions

1/ Draw a circle on your piece of cloth. You can use a compass or a lid instead (20cm diameter is about the right size).

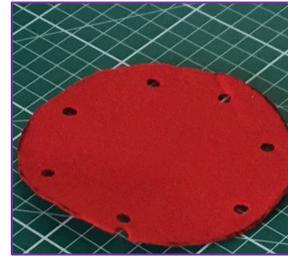
You can decorate the material if you choose.



4/ Pull the strings tight and tie them to your belt or trousers. You now have your very own Bulla.



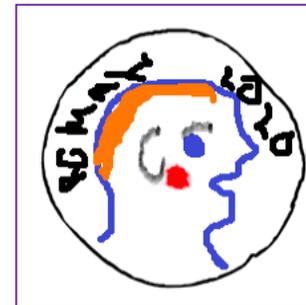
2/ Make at least seven holes at intervals around the edge of the circle. Make sure you make an odd number of holes (5,7,9). Be careful not to make your holes too close to the edge of the cloth.



5/ Make your own coin on card using the images on the next page. You could even design your own coins or notes. Why not include your name or face on the money?

3/ Take a piece of string or ribbon and thread it through the holes, tie the ends in a knot. You could plait your pieces of wool or string to make them stronger and thicker.

Pull the string to tighten the pouch while leaving it open enough to add the lucky message or coin.



Sometimes children would keep a lucky coin inside their bulla.

The coins sometimes had the name or picture of the current ruler. Later coins often had the date on them.



Design and make your own coin

- 1/ Cut out a small circle from some thick cardboard.
- 2/ Cover the circle with silver kitchen foil.
- 3/ Practice your design on a scrap piece of paper- you could draw a Roman Emperor, a pattern or your own face!!
- 4/ Use a sharp pencil to scratch your design onto the foil.

This coin was found in Ipplepen. It is a Republican denarius from 49BC, and is made from silver.

Find out more

Why do you think coins are useful to archaeologists ?

How were Roman coins made ?

How much did things cost in Roman times?