



# Just like a Roman

## Teaching and performance notes

**Before teaching the song, why not play it as background music to other Roman-related classroom activities, so that your class can become familiar with it?**

### **1. Listen to and discuss 'Just Like A Roman'**

Listen to 'Just like a Roman', then ask the children to describe the general feel of the song (eg fast, slow, smooth, bouncy, soft, spiky). Ask what gives the song its mood. (The words, the tempo, the instruments, the melody and rhythm and how they all combine.) Listen again and ask the children to notice what happens to the pitch of the song at the beginning of the second and third verses. (Each verse rises in pitch by a semitone – this helps to give the song a sense of building excitement.)

### **2. Read and discuss the lyrics**

Read the lyrics together. Discuss which aspects of Roman life are described in each verse. (You could follow this with a fun quiz, with points awarded in Roman numerals for each historical fact recalled.)

### **3. Learn the introduction section**

Listen to the introduction section (track 2). All together, say the words slowly and in rhythm several times. (Notice the gap between '...archaeology' and 'we know a lot about them'.) Encourage the children to enjoy the words and articulate clearly. Practise singing along with the track.

### **4. Learn the chorus**

Listen to the chorus (track 3). Divide the class into two groups, one for the main tune and one for the echo. (Make sure the echo group are aware that they sing the last line of the chorus – 'Party like a Roman' - at the same time as the first group.)

All together, say the words slowly and in rhythm several times. Gradually build up speed! (To help the class remember the lyrics, they could make up simple hand gestures or dance moves to go with each line. British Sign Language interpretation works particularly well.) Practise singing along with the track and then with the chorus backing track (track 4). (Notice that in the last chorus 'Party like a Roman' is sung three

times before the final 'Just like a Roman')

## 5. Learn the verses

Learn each verse thoroughly before moving on to the next. Listen to the verse you are about to learn (tracks 5 to 7). Read the words aloud together - slowly, clearly and in rhythm. Emphasise the importance of clear articulation, especially when imparting tricky bits of information to an audience! (To help the children remember the lyrics, encourage them to visualise what they are describing.)

Sing along with each track several times until the class is confident.

Encourage the children to perform the various sound effects eg Bleh! Uurgh! Ha ha! with vigour. (You could choose a particularly expressive individual to take charge of the sound effects!)

## 6. Practise singing the whole song

Sing along with the guide vocal track until everyone is confident. Practise singing with the backing track (track 11).

## 7. Add untuned percussion

Using the downloadable/photocopiable parts and the untuned percussion track (track 10) teach the untuned percussion parts. There are three main percussion instruments used in the song: drum, tambourine and woodblock. In the chorus, all three play. In the first verse, only the drum is heard; in the second the drum is joined by the woodblock; in the third verse the tambourine joins in as well. Listen to the rhythms (track 10) and then practise beating or clapping each rhythm as a group. Practise playing the percussion parts along with the instrumental backing track (track 11).

## 8. Add tuned percussion

There is one tuned percussion part (for xylophone) although it can be split into two parts with one child taking the higher notes and another taking the lower notes. It begins after the first bar of the third verse (they excelled themselves at). Use the practise track (track 9) and the downloadable tuned percussion part to learn the part and then practice playing it along with the backing track (track 11).

## 9. Add the second voice part

The second voice part comes in at the final chorus. Use track 8 to learn the part and then practice it with the guide vocal track (track 1). When this is secure, practice it with the backing track (track 11).

## 10. Prepare to perform

Decide on a plan for the performance, recording as much detail as possible, i.e.

Introduction	CD backing track
Chorus 1	Details of who is singing the first part/echo Snare drum
Verse 1	Details of who will perform the sound effects 'Bleh!' and 'Eeouw!' Woodblock
Chorus 2	Details of who is singing the first part/echo
Verse 2	Shaker
Chorus 3	Details of who is singing the first part/echo
Verse 3	Xylophone
Chorus 4 + Coda	Details of who is singing the first part and who the second

With your class, discuss non-musical factors that help make a good performance (eg enthusiasm, confidence, energy, clear articulation).

As a group, think about:

- when and where you will be performing the song
- dress code/costume

Decide how you will stage your performance (eg everyone standing in formal rows, or in group tableau) and rehearse in the performance space if possible.

## 9. Performance

Hold a dress rehearsal or final run-through, then discuss last minute improvements in a positive way!

Perform 'Just Like A Roman' to a live audience.