

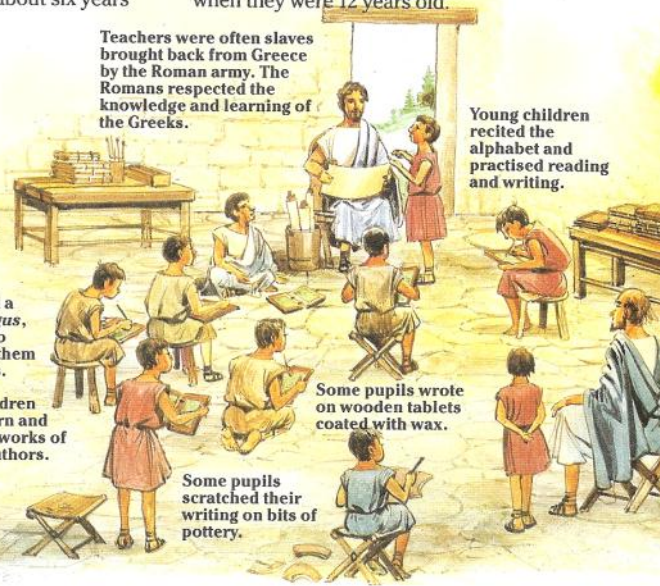
## Education

Roman children were educated according to the wealth of their families. Many poorer children never learned to read or write because their parents needed them to work. Richer children started school when they were about six years

old, attending a *ludus* (primary school). Most children left the *ludus* at the age of 11, and had any further education at home. But girls often began preparing for marriage, which could take place when they were 12 years old.

### The school day

Most schools only had one room, on the ground floor of a house or behind a shop. There was usually only one class, of about 12 children. Remains of pupils' exercises, and descriptions by Roman writers of their education, tell us about the school day.



Teachers were often slaves brought back from Greece by the Roman army. The Romans respected the knowledge and learning of the Greeks.

Young children recited the alphabet and practised reading and writing.

Rich families employed a slave called a *paedagogus*, who took the children to school and supervised them while they were in class.

Older children had to learn and recite the works of famous authors.

Some pupils wrote on wooden tablets coated with wax.

Some pupils scratched their writing on bits of pottery.

### The grammaticus

Around the age of 11 some boys went to a *grammaticus* (secondary school), where they learned such subjects as history, philosophy, geography, geometry, music and astronomy. One of the most important subjects was Greek, because Greek culture was such a big influence on Roman life. Works of Greek and Roman literature were studied in great detail. Pupils were expected to be able to imitate the styles of famous authors. Greek was also necessary for Romans because most of the best books on other subjects were written by Greeks.

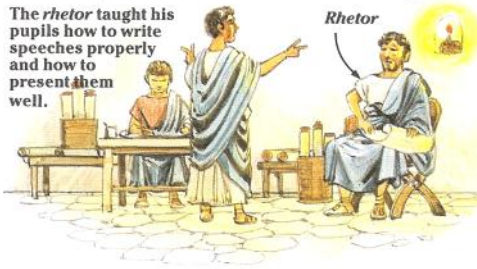


### Further education

One purpose of secondary education was to prepare the student for study with a teacher of public speaking called a *rhetor*. Anyone who wanted to be a politician or lawyer had to learn to speak in public. This training began when a youth was 13 or 14, and could take many years; Cicero continued his studies until he was nearly 30. If parents were very rich they might send their sons to Athens or Rhodes to learn these skills from the best Greek teachers. Only the wealthiest people could afford to give their children this education, so few poor people became politicians or lawyers.

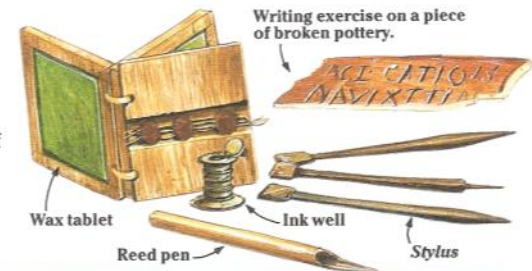
The *rhetor* taught his pupils how to write speeches properly and how to present them well.

*Rhetor*



## Writing

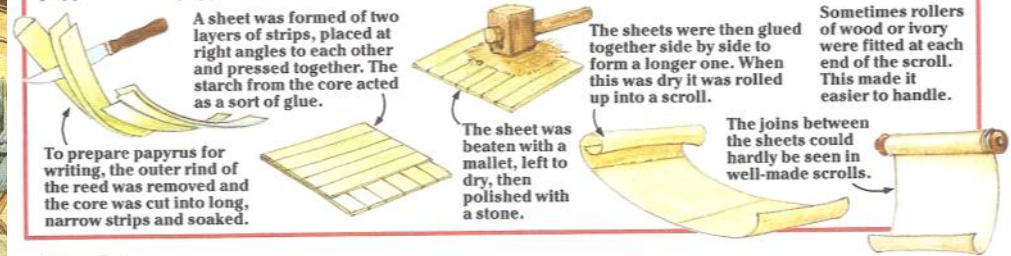
In school, pupils practised writing by scratching on panels of wood coated with wax, using a pointed metal pen called a *stylus*. When the space on the tablet was used up, the wax was scraped off and more was applied. Some children scratched writing exercises on pieces of broken pottery. Older pupils were allowed to use pens made from reeds or metal. They wrote on sheets of papyrus (see below) with ink made of gum and soot.



### Papyrus

In Roman times paper made from wood-pulp had not been invented. Instead the Romans used a material made from an Egyptian reed called papyrus. When papyrus was not available,

parchment made from washed animal skin was used, but it was regarded as inferior to papyrus, probably because it was much heavier. The method of manufacturing papyrus is shown below.



To prepare papyrus for writing, the outer rind of the reed was removed and the core was cut into long, narrow strips and soaked.

A sheet was formed of two layers of strips, placed at right angles to each other and pressed together. The starch from the core acted as a sort of glue.

The sheet was beaten with a mallet, left to dry, then polished with a stone.

The sheets were then glued together side by side to form a longer one. When this was dry it was rolled up into a scroll.

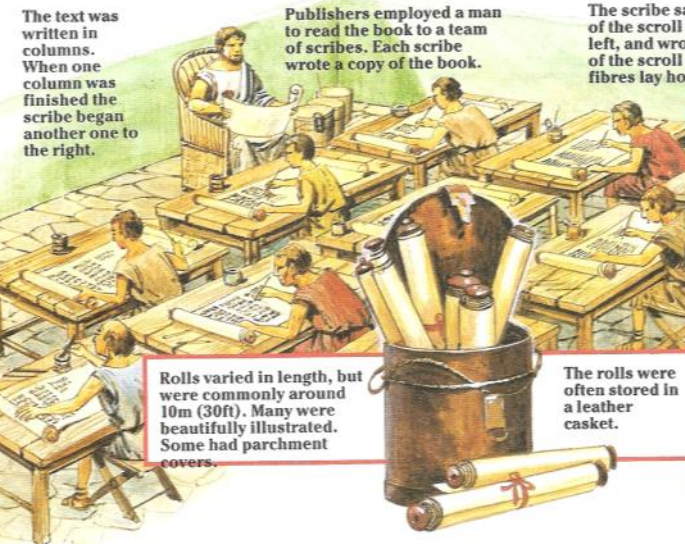
Sometimes rollers of wood or ivory were fitted at each end of the scroll. This made it easier to handle.

The joints between the sheets could hardly be seen in well-made scrolls.

### Books

The Romans were very fond of books. In large cities like Rome and Alexandria there were numerous bookshops and publishers. Many people treasured books, and built up large collections of them. The state, and also some rich individuals, set up libraries for the public to use.

By the late Empire there were 29 libraries in Rome. Books took a long time to make, because each one had to be written out by hand. They were copied by scribes who were often Greek slaves. This picture shows how a manuscript was copied.



The text was written in columns. When one column was finished the scribe began another one to the right.

Publishers employed a man to read the book to a team of scribes. Each scribe wrote a copy of the book.

The scribe sat with the ends of the scroll to his right and left, and wrote on the side of the scroll on which the fibres lay horizontally.

Rolls varied in length, but were commonly around 10m (30ft). Many were beautifully illustrated. Some had parchment covers.

The rolls were often stored in a leather casket.

### The codex



In the 4th century AD the scroll began to be replaced by the *codex*, in which the pages were secured at one side. The *codex* was adopted by the Christian Church because it held more information than a scroll, and was easier to store, carry and read.