

Roman Mosaics



LO: I know what a mosaic is.
I know how Romans created mosaics

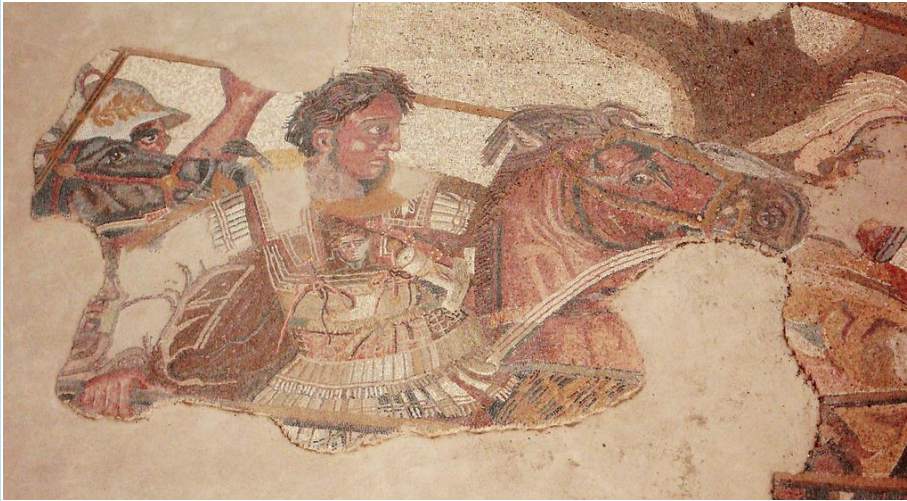
Mosaics

The floors of Roman buildings were often richly decorated with mosaics. Mosaics were made from tiny coloured stones which they called tesserae.



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Mosaics



Mosaic floors were a statement of how wealthy and important you were. Poor people would not be able to afford them. The bigger and more detailed the mosaic, the more impressive.

Mosaics have been found that show scenes of history, as well as everyday Roman life.



Mosaics

The mosaic would decorate the floor of the main room. These were stuck to the floor with mortar, a type of cement.



Mosaics

The Greeks were the first to make mosaics. They started by using pebbles and then also began to use cut stone with pebbles.

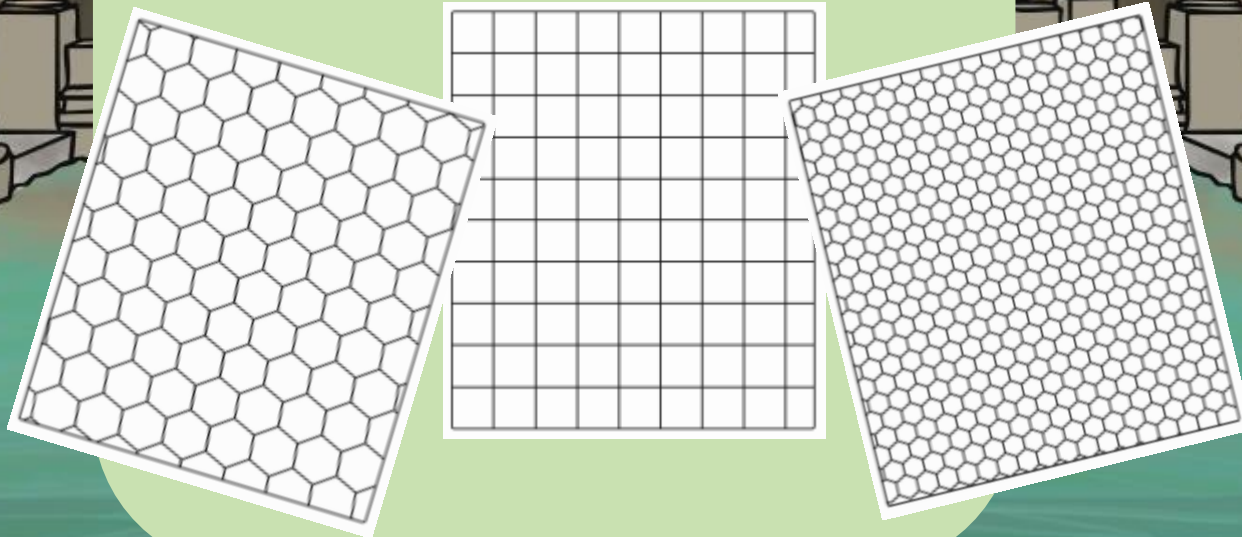


The Romans copied their method but just used cut stone instead of pebbles. Villas and bath houses had mosaic floors and some office signs were even made of mosaics.

Temples and public areas usually had patterned floors made with the larger cut stone tiles, a method known as Opus Sectile.

Starter:

*Using the templates attached
have a go at creating some of
your own mosaic designs.*



Mosaics

The Romans used a hammer and hardie to cut the stones to approximately 8-12mm. A hardie (on the left) is like a chisel, this would be stuck into a block of wood.



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Mosaics

Some mosaics had pieces cut down to 1-2mm for very intricate patterns. This is the Alexander mosaic that you can still see today in Pompeii, Italy.



You don't see lots of bright colours in Roman mosaics. This is because they mainly used natural stones. The red, used particularly in Britain, was from cut brick or tile. Occasionally, they might use bits of glass for a particular effect.

Imagine the length of a metre stick, then a square metre. Just 1m² of mosaic on the floor might take 10 000 pieces of tesserae!



Mosaics

You can probably imagine that a floor made from thousands of tiny stones would not be comfortable to walk on, but this wasn't a problem when you had slaves to work hard for you. The slaves would have to use hard stones, sand and water to grind the stones down so they were smooth to walk on.



Task: Create your own mosaic collage design.

Sketch out your idea first.
Try to create a bold
symmetrical design.



Now using the
mosaic squares
create your own
collage mosaic.



Create a Mosaic

A mosaic is a piece of art made up of small coloured pieces. These pieces can be coloured glass, stone, paper or other materials. The small pieces combine to make one large picture or pattern.

The Ancient Greeks and Romans created mosaic art, some of which we can still see today. They also used mosaics to decorate the floors and walls of their houses.

To make a mosaic, you will need:

- a large piece of paper to put your mosaic on;
- a pencil;
- small squares of different coloured paper (cut paper into strips and then into squares). Different types of paper such as tissue paper, shiny paper and sugar paper look good when used together. You might want to have different shades of the same colour to add depth to your mosaic.
- scissors;
- glue.

What to do:

1. Choose what your mosaic is going to be of. It could be a pattern or a picture. Look at the examples on the next page if you need inspiration.
2. Lightly draw your design with a pencil. This will help you know where to place the coloured squares.
3. You may want to arrange your pieces of paper into same-coloured groups.
4. Stick the squares in the right place on your design. You might need to cut the squares into different shapes.
5. Some mosaics have a border of black squares, you may wish to add one when you are finished.

