

Make your own Roman Purse



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 safe your special coins.



Two gold bullae from the buried city of Herculaneum. 1st century AD.

What 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 assist with making holes

Instructions

1/ Use the template below to 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.

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.



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.



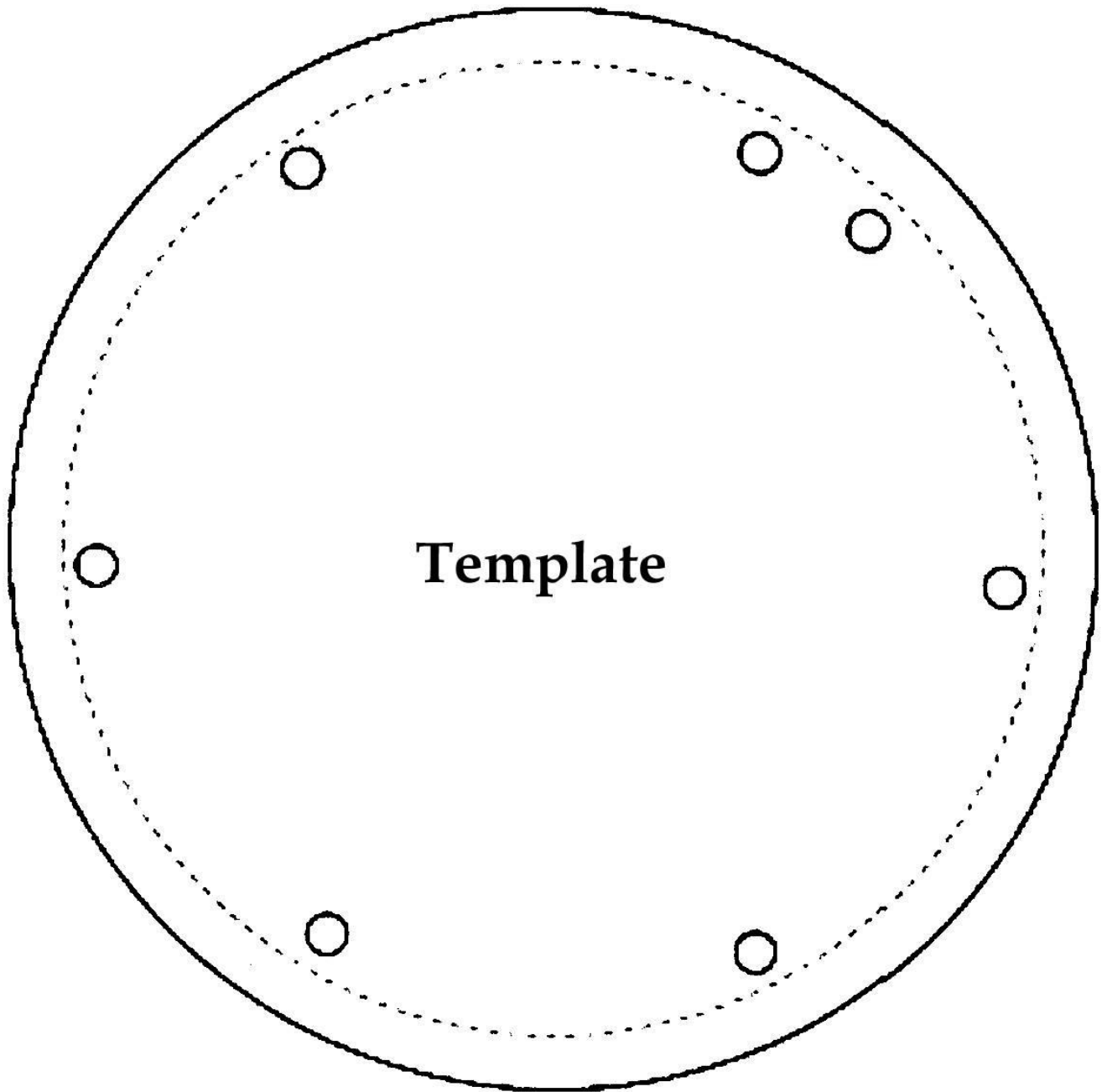
4/ Make your own coin on card using the templates below. You could even design your own coins or notes. Why not include your name or face on the money?



5/ Pull the strings tight and tie them to your belt or trousers. You have made your own bulla.



Roman bulla template



To make your own bulla use this template to cut a circle of material.

Crazy Coins

Sometimes children would keep a lucky coin inside their bulla.

The Heritage Service has many coins in the collection. To see more Roman coins found on the Isle of Wight click

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/Residents/Libraries-Cultural-and-Heritage/Heritage-Service/Museum-Service/The-Thomas-Rowlandson-Collection2>

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



This coin was found on the Isle of Wight. It is a denarius it dates from 82BC, and is made from silver.

Find out more

Why coins are useful to archaeologists

How Roman coins were made

How much did things cost in Roman times?

Click

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/Residents/Libraries-Cultural-and-Heritage/Heritage-Service/Museum-Service/The-Thomas-Rowlandson-Collection2>

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.



- 4/ Use a sharp pencil to scratch your design onto the foil.

Spot the difference



Can you spot six differences in the pictures of Roman coins above?

Be a detective - Find out more

Can you search on the internet for other meanings of the word bulla?
If you wanted to find out more about Roman bullae then this site will tell you more [Cambridge School Classics Project](#)

Explore the website of the Portable Antiquities Scheme <https://finds.org.uk/>

- Look at all the Roman coins found in England. (TOP TIP select the 'with images' button when you get to the database page).
- Can you find any coins found on the Isle of Wight?
- How many different animals can you find depicted on the coins?

Many coins that are produced today have different information and pictures on them. Some celebrate events or an artist. Ask an adult if you can borrow a handful of coins, record what information you can find on each one. Does it have; a date or a picture? What colour is it? How much is it worth? You could make a table to record your results. (Remember to wash your hands after handling the coins).

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Web - www.iowight.com/museums

Isle of Wight Council Heritage Service

