

Task 1: What can we learn from *Life of Cato* about the upbringing of boys in Rome?

As soon as Cato had a son, only some urgent business of state prevented him from being present when his wife bathed the baby and dressed him in his swaddling clothes. The mother nursed the baby herself and often nursed the children of the slaves as well so that, by bringing them up with her own son, they might be friends. As soon as the boy showed signs of understanding, Cato himself took charge of him and taught him to read, even though he had a clever slave called Chilo who was a teacher and had several pupils. Cato himself said that he didn't think it was right for his son to be scolded by a slave or have his ears tweaked if he was slow in learning, and he thought it wrong for his son to be indebted to a slave for such a priceless thing as his education. He not only sought for his son to hurl the javelin, fight in armour, and ride a horse, but also to box, to endure the heat and cold, and to swim in the waves and currents of the river. He also wrote out his History himself so that his son could learn about his country's ancient traditions at home. He also says that he did not use bad language in the presence of his son.

– Plutarch, *Life of Cato* XX.3-6

Task 2: The School Day

The school day started very early, around dawn. Sometimes a boy would buy a bite to eat for breakfast on his way to school. He might call at a bakery for bread or small cakes sweetened with honey. Lessons went on until midday when there was a break for lunch. Boys may return home or they may bring some food with them so that they could spend time playing games with their friends. Lessons resumed after lunch and went on until the middle of the afternoon. Most boys probably then went to the baths with their friends.

Boys had every ninth day, which were market days, off school and any religious festival day was a holiday. Also any days on which there was some public spectacle, such as a triumph or a gladiatorial show, would almost certainly have closed the schools. There were no long holidays such as modern schools enjoy.

Boys were usually accompanied to school by a *paedagogus*, a Greek slave who was his personal attendant. Sometimes the *paedagogus* would be a personal tutor to the boy, teaching him reading, writing, and arithmetic. However, mostly he was responsible for the behaviour and appearance of the boy, as well as teaching him Greek.

Task 3: Schools (*ludi*)

A school was normally run by a single teacher and almost any room served as a classroom. They were usually small and were next to houses or shops – some were open to the street and must have been noisy and very cold in winter.



Pupils sat on wooden benches and had no desks so they had to write balancing their writing tablets on their knees. They were also expected to provide their own equipment.

- **Task 4: School Equipment.** Describe a Roman boy's school equipment using the below information:

<u>Equipment</u>	<u>Description</u>
	
	
	
	
	

Task 5: The *ludi magister* or *litterator*

Choose from the selection at the bottom to fill in the missing words to find out more information about the first stage of a boy's education.

The first teacher a boy went to was the '*ludi magister*', '*litterator*' or teacher of letters. He taught the boys to read, write, and do simple _____ . They recited the names of the _____, chanted the _____ backwards and forwards and learned to write by _____ copying. They were also expected to _____ their multiplication tables out loud.

letters chant arithmetic alphabet endless