

Lucius and the Roman Tablet

"Lucius, sit down. I have something for you," Lucius's mother said.

Lucius did as he was told and pulled out a small chair.

"This came today," his mother said. She picked up what looked like a small wooden rectangle and sat down next to him.

"What is it?" Lucius asked.

"Don't you know?" his mother replied.

Lucius stared at the rectangle. It looked like the wax tablet he was learning to read on but this one was broken around the edges. Written into the wood were words in blue ink. He saw his name at the top. "Is it a letter from Father?" he asked.

"Yes," his mother replied. "It has come all the way across the Roman Empire, just for you."

Lucius's mind was racing. It had been years since he'd heard from his father. Every night, Mother would tell stories of Father's bravery as he was fighting against bad people in far-off lands. She would say how strong and fit he was and how proud he was to have Lucius as his son. She explained how important

it was for his father to live away from home. The Roman Empire had to fight other nations to keep itself powerful and rich. One day, his father would come back and be given his own land. They would all be together again... but Lucius would be a grown man when that happened.

"Shall I read the letter to you?" Lucius's mother said.

Lucius nodded.

"Lucius," his mother read, "my dear son, I'm sorry for not writing sooner. I hope you are reading this in good health and that Rome is as glorious as ever.

"Right now, I am in Britannia. It is across the seas in the northern parts of the Roman Empire. We fight the enemy every day but they are no match for the Roman army. They may be strong but we are organised and we fight with our minds as much as our swords.

Many years have passed since I left Rome. In that time, we have fought many battles and we have won every one. In time, we will beat all of Britannia too.

"I pray that one day we will be together again. Until then, take care, Lucius. Hail Hadrian. Hail Rome. From your father, Marcus Maximus."

Lucius's mother reached over to hug her son and he tried to picture his father in his mind. But he couldn't. He had forgotten what his father looked like.

"Hail Hadrian," Lucius said, as he hugged his mother. "Hail Rome."

1. What did Lucius's mother ask Lucius to do at the start of the story? Tick **one**.

- ☐ read a letter
- ☐ sit down
- ☐ be a Roman soldier
- ☐ pick up a wooden rectangle

2. What did the rectangle look like? Find and copy the answer.

3. Who wrote the letter? Tick **one**.

- ☐ Lucius
- ☐ Lucius's mother
- ☐ Lucius's father
- ☐ the Roman people

4. What does Lucius's mother think of Lucius's father? Give two reasons in your answer.

5. Draw a line to match the sentence opener to the correct ending.

I hope	for not writing sooner.
I pray	you are reading this in good health.
I'm sorry	that one day we will be together again.

6. Number these to show the order that they appear in the text. The first one has been done for you.

- ☒ 1 Lucius did as he was told.
- ☐ He tried to picture his father in his mind.
- ☐ Written into the wood were words in blue ink.
- ☐ Father wrote, "Right now, I am in Britannia."
- ☐ The Roman Empire had to fight other nations.