

# The Romans - Script

*The children are divided into groups:*

- Roman soldiers: some road builders, some foot soldiers
- Slaves: ragged road builders and smarter household slaves
- Wealthy Romans: a villa owner and his wife, plus male and female guests at a feast in a villa
- Emperor Claudius, his wife and attendants

**NARRATOR** A Roman road is under construction. It is being built by slaves overseen by soldiers.

**ROMAN 1** Put your backs into it, you lazy good-for-nothings!

**ROMAN 2** We've got to get the surface finished within the hour. A surveyor is on his way to inspect the work.

**ROMAN 3** Move yourselves if you want food tonight!

*The Roman soldiers stand to one side, facing away from the slaves.*

**SLAVE 1** Food they call it! A crust and some slops if we're lucky!

**SLAVE 2** Then the dreaded chains – how can a man sleep chained to a wall?

**SLAVE 3** Michah here was beaten again last night – he'll never learn, will you boy?

**MICHAH** Why should I keep my mouth shut? I'll be dead before I've served 30 years and stand a chance of freedom. I've nothing to lose. All I asked for was some rag to bind my feet and they said I'd insulted the Emperor!

**SLAVE 4** Freedom? Freedom is a joke – I haven't met anyone yet who has become a free Roman citizen after being a slave. I'll certainly never see my homeland again!

**SLAVE 5** I've heard that they've got some new slave children in the big villa up the road. Their parents sold them into slavery – wilful they were, couldn't control them. That can't be right.

**SLAVE 6** They don't deserve kids – I had three of my own. I don't even know if they survived the Roman raid on our village.

**SLAVE 7** Watch it – here comes the guard. Heads down lads, look busy!

*A Roman officer approaches with the surveyor and the soldiers. The slaves jump to attention.*

**SURVEYOR** I've come to inspect your work. We'll be moving on to start another new road in a few days, which will include a massive aqueduct to take water to the new town.

**ROMAN 1** *(To the slaves)* There might be extra rations for you if you've learnt a bit about road building from this by then! Tell the officer what we've taught you – stand up, look lively!

**Song 1 THE ROAD BUILDING SONG**  
*(see p22 for lyrics)*

CD Track 1/5

*Use the following facts for the children to showcase their knowledge of Roman road building and to tell of Roman roads still in use today.*