

Dolls in Tunics & Teddies in Togas: Students

Sirida Graham Terk

THE ARCHER SCHOOL FOR GIRLS
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

PHASE I: LEARNING ABOUT ROMAN DRESS

Step 1. In class, you will start to learn the basic elements of dress, the typical members of a family, and the basic levels of early Imperial Roman society.

Step 2. Your teacher will assign a "Roman person" to you from the following: slave, young girl, upper class boy (under 14), married woman, adult male citizen, or senator (and possibly other choices). Then you will receive or research information about the mode of dress of each person and a *Grading Rubric* explaining how you will be graded.

Step 3. You will have a few days (3–4), to research the clothes, social level, and basic daily activities of your assigned character. Gather and record information about what different people wore and how they embellished themselves; include their shoes, hairstyles, jewelry, tools, and weapons. Be sure to keep track of your sources, preferably in bibliographic format. This research will be done in class and/or as homework.

Step 4. Finally, compose a complete, detailed list of all items of clothing and accessories your character would wear. Describe colors and materials, use the appropriate Latin terminology (if known), and explain the reasons for each item, e.g. "My senator will wear a *toga praetexta* with wide purple stripes (*clavi lati*), which indicate his senatorial status." This written assignment will be handed in for formal grading at the end of a week.

PHASE II: MAKING THE CLOTHING

Step 1. On the first day, everyone will start working on a tunic for a cloth doll or other model, such as a bear. Measure your doll and lay out the fabric for a basic *tunica* based on the paper pattern your teacher will provide. If your *tunica* cloth has been pre-cut, proceed to the end of Step 2.

Step 2. Using the pattern, cut the basic tunic from cloth such as homespun or muslin. Fold the cloth in half widthwise to make a rectangle half as long as the entire piece of cloth.

Step 3. Sew the side seams from the base of the armhole down, leaving a width of two to three fingers (approx. 1–1½ inch) for the armhole. The width of a pinky finger (approx. ¼–½ inch) from the side edge of the tunic is a good mea-

sure for the side hem. The side seam is done with a simple running stitch. (Remember that you are sewing the garment inside out at this point.)

4. The neck hole can be cut by folding the garment in half lengthwise to find the center. Snip off a SMALL triangle of fabric from the top of the center fold. (Fold the cloth into a vertical rectangle and cut off a tiny bit of the upper right hand corner.) You may use a shallow "v" or semi-circular shape for the neck. Start out with a small cut, try the *tunica* on the doll, and increase the size of the neck hole as needed.

5. If time permits, hem the sleeves, neck, and armholes using a simple running stitch. Once you have finished hemming garment openings, turn the *tunica* right side out to dress your doll.

6. Dress your doll in the *tunica* and tie it with thin cord or rope appropriate to your character's status. Then blouse the *tunica* according to the character's gender and/or status.

7. At this point, continue to create the external garments and accessories of your character based on your research, using stitches, low temperature glue guns, craft supplies, and your imagination. Your teacher may provide further guidelines for dressing your character.

8. Practice drawing your doll's face on paper with the markers you plan to use. Then, carefully draw a face on the doll with markers. Be sure to use fine or extra fine markers for smaller facial features such as lips, eyes, and ears.

9. If you plan to use the doll as a puppet, pull up the garments to expose the doll's back and hot glue a dowel (⅜" to ½" in diameter and approximately 2' long) onto the back from the base of the neck to the bottom underneath the clothing.

10. For display purposes, type a placard with a description modeled on this one:

My name is _____ [Latin name of character], and I am a _____ [role such as senator, slave, citizen, matron, etc.] in 80 B.C.E. I am wearing _____ [list garments

LESSON PLANS

and accessories, if present]. I was created by _____ [your name, class, etc.]. Your teacher may ask you to write a dialogue balloon for your character instead.

INFORMATION ABOUT EXTERIOR GARMENTS AND ACCESSORIES

The following are guidelines for outer garments and accessories are based on information from *Virtual Roma*, *The World of Roman Costume*, and *Ecce Romani*. This information will help you to work independently. A 12" doll is a 6' person, so the scale is 2" = 1'. The long female *tunica*, *stola*, and *palla* are simple rectangles. To understand the size and shape of a male toga, students should refer to the *Virtual Roma* website or handouts provided by the teacher. The correct size of a toga will be roughly 36" long x 24" wide.

- A slave might have a cloak and/or tools of his/her duties (e.g. bundle of firewood, burlap sack of cotton, lantern, scroll, wax tablet, stylus, basket of grain or beans, bale of wool, ax, pick, barrel, pottery, or animal). These depend on whether the slave's duties were domestic or agricultural and where he or she worked (kitchen, field, garden); a male slave might also have served as a tutor.
- The *tunica* of an upper class young boy under 14 requires the addition of *clavi angusti* (thin purple/crimson borders) down both sides from shoulder to bottom hem. He also might wear a *toga praetexta*, a toga with a purple

border along the hem, if he is dressed formally for a public outing. His hair would have been short and probably somewhat unkempt.

- A young girl requires a long *tunica exterior* made of a soft, fine-gauge white cotton. If she is an upper class girl, she also might have a simple necklace with a *lunula* (tiny moon-shaped pendant) or star-shaped pendant. For outings in the city, she could wear a *toga praetexta* with *clavi angusti*. Her *tunica*, however, would never bear *clavi*. Her hair would be pulled back in a braid or ponytail and secured with simple wool or cotton bands (*vittae*).
- A married woman requires a *stola* and *palla*. She should have an upswept hairstyle secured with ribbons or *vittae*, and might also have hair accessories, earrings, necklaces, and bangles depending on her husband's social status.
- An adult male citizen requires a *toga pura*. This should be of white cotton fabric and should measure 36" by 24" for a 12-inch doll. A male citizen might wear a signet ring and would be accessorized according to his daily duties. (e.g., an equestrian might carry a bridle, helmet, shield, or weapon.)
- A senator may have *clavi lati* (wider purple borders) down both sides of his *tunica* and must have them on his *toga praetexta*. A senator might carry a scroll and would have a signet ring.