Name: _____ Date: _____

Roman Roads Built Layer by Layer

Circle group

Roman roads were built to last. Parts of many are still in Europe today. They are nearly two thousand years old. How did the builders do it?

First, workers marked a straight line. Roman roads often ran straight so soldiers and traders could go fast. Next, crews dug a trench and took out the soft soil. This gave a firm place to start.

Then they filled the trench in layers. Big stones went at the bottom. Smaller stones went on top. Then came gravel and sand. The top was often flat paving stones set close together. The road was a little higher in the middle. Rain ran off to the sides into ditches.

Stone markers called milestones stood by the roads. Each one told how far it was to a town. Carts, walkers, and messengers used these roads. Many roads met in Rome. So people say all roads lead to Rome.

Questions

1. Why did Roman roads often run straight?

_____

_____

2. What did crews do after workers marked the line?

_____

_____

3. What kind of stones went at the bottom?

_____

_____

4. How did the shape of the road help with rain?

_____

_____

5. Why did builders take out the soft soil first?

_____

_____

6. Why might these roads have lasted so long?

_____

_____

Words to know

trench: a long narrow ditch dug in the ground
layers: flat levels placed one on top of another
gravel: small pieces of rock
paving: a hard surface made for walking or driving
milestones: stone markers that show distances along a road

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Roman Roads Built Layer by Layer

Triangle group

Roman roads were built to last. Parts of many of them can still be found in Europe today, nearly two thousand years later. How did the builders manage to make something so strong?

First, workers marked a straight line across the land. Roman roads often ran straight so that soldiers and traders could travel fast. Next, crews dug a trench along the line and took out the soft soil. This gave them a firm place to start.

Then they filled the trench in layers. Large stones went at the bottom of it. On top of those came smaller stones, and then gravel mixed with sand. The top layer was often made of flat paving stones, which were fitted closely together. The road was built a little higher in the middle, so rain ran off to the sides, where ditches carried it away.

Stone markers called milestones stood along the roads. Each one told travelers how far they were from a town. Carts, walkers, and messengers all used these roads. People still say that all roads lead to Rome, because so many roads met in that city.

Questions

1. Why did Roman roads often run in a straight line?

_____

_____

2. What did crews do after workers marked the line?

_____

_____

3. What kind of stones went at the bottom of the trench?

_____

_____

4. How did the shape of the road help with rain?

_____

_____

5. Why did builders remove the soft soil first?

_____

_____

6. Why might these roads have lasted so long?

_____

_____

Words to know

trench: a long narrow ditch dug in the ground
layers: flat levels placed one on top of another
gravel: small pieces of rock
paving: a hard surface made for walking or driving
milestones: stone markers that show distances along a road

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Roman Roads Built Layer by Layer

Square group

Roman roads were constructed to endure, and parts of many of them can still be found across Europe today, nearly two thousand years after they were laid. How were the builders able to accomplish such a feat?

First, surveyors marked a straight line across the countryside, because Roman roads frequently ran in straight stretches so that soldiers and traders could travel swiftly. Next, crews dug a trench along that line and removed the soft soil, which provided a firm foundation on which to build.

The trench was then filled in layers. Large stones were set at the bottom, followed by smaller stones, and then by gravel mixed with sand. The surface was often made of flat paving stones fitted closely together. The road was built slightly higher in the middle, so that rainwater drained off to the sides, where ditches carried it away.

Stone markers known as milestones stood along the roads, and each one told travelers how far they were from a town. Carts, walkers, and messengers all used these roads. The saying that all roads lead to Rome arose because so many roads came together in that city.

Questions

1. Why did Roman roads frequently run in straight stretches?

_____

_____

2. What did the crews do after the line was marked?

_____

_____

3. Which stones were set at the bottom of the trench?

_____

_____

4. How did the shape of the road help it deal with rainwater?

_____

_____

5. Why did the builders remove the soft soil before building?

_____

_____

6. What might explain why parts of these roads have survived so long?

_____

_____

Words to know

trench: a long narrow ditch dug in the ground
layers: flat levels placed one on top of another
gravel: small pieces of rock
paving: a hard surface made for walking or driving
milestones: stone markers that show distances along a road

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: Roman Roads Built Layer by Layer

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: Roman Roads Built Layer by Layer

Easier · 151 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 1.7

1. So soldiers and traders could go fast.
2. They dug a trench and took out the soft soil.
3. Big stones.
4. It was higher in the middle, so rain ran off to the sides.
5. Soft soil would not hold the road, so they needed a firm start.
6. They were built in strong layers and the rain ran off.

Triangle: Roman Roads Built Layer by Layer

This passage · 186 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.9

1. So that soldiers and traders could travel fast.
2. They dug a trench and took out the soft soil.
3. Large stones.
4. It was higher in the middle, so rain ran off to the sides into ditches.
5. Soft soil would not hold the road, so they needed a firm place to start.
6. They were built in strong layers and let the rain drain away.

Square: Roman Roads Built Layer by Layer

Harder · 190 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.2

1. So that soldiers and traders could travel swiftly.
2. They dug a trench and removed the soft soil.
3. Large stones.
4. It was slightly higher in the middle, so water drained to the sides and into ditches.
5. Soft soil could not support a road, so they needed a firm foundation.
6. Their strong layers and drainage kept them from washing away.