

ENGLISH · Y4

# Historical Diary — Year 4

WAGOLL: A Roman Centurion in Britain

## The Model Text

Diary of Marcus Tullius, Centurion of the Ninth Legion 12th day of October, 89 AD Fort of Eboracum, Britannia Dear Diary, It has been three long years since I left my home in Rome, and I miss the warm sunshine more than I can say. Britannia is a strange, cold country — even now, in the early autumn, the rain falls almost every day and a chill wind blows from the north. This morning, I rose at dawn as usual. My men were already at the fort gates, polishing their armour and sharpening their gladii. We marched ten miles before midday — through a thick forest where I felt sure unfriendly eyes were watching us from behind every tree. The local people, the Britons, do not like us. I cannot say I blame them, for we have taken much of their land. Yet we have brought them roads, bathhouses and our great gods. Surely, in time, they will see that Roman ways are best. This afternoon, I supervised the building of our new defensive wall. The stones are heavy and the work is slow, but Emperor Hadrian has commanded that the wall must reach all the way across this northern land. It will stop the wild Picts from raiding our forts. Tonight, I shall write a letter to my wife, Cornelia, who is still in Rome. I have not seen her for three years. I dream every night of returning home — of warm bread, of olive oil, of the noise of the Forum. Britannia is a posting of duty, not of joy. For the glory of Rome, Marcus Tullius

## Notated features

What makes this a strong Y4 historical text?

- DATE in historical style: '12th day of October, 89 AD'
- LOCATION: 'Fort of Eboracum, Britannia' (Roman name for York)
- FIRST PERSON: 'I,' 'my,' 'we' — diary convention
- PAST TENSE for events; PRESENT for ongoing feelings



- FRONTED ADVERBIALS: 'This morning,' 'Tonight,' 'For three years'
- HISTORICAL DETAIL: 'gladii' (Roman swords), 'Emperor Hadrian,' 'Picts,' 'Forum'
- SENSORY/EMOTIONAL DETAIL: 'cold country,' 'warm bread,' 'olive oil'
- POINT OF VIEW: shows Roman attitudes — sympathetic but truthful
- BALANCE: shows both daily life AND emotional state
- FORMAL CLOSE: 'For the glory of Rome' — period-appropriate
- AUTHENTIC VOICE: not modern English, but accessible to Y4

## Writing prompt

Write your own historical diary. Choose: a Viking raider after their first raid, an Anglo-Saxon farmer in 800 AD, a child during the Great Fire of London, an Egyptian boy/girl helping to build the pyramids, or a Tudor servant at Henry VIII's palace. Include: an authentic date and location, a description of one day (morning, afternoon, evening), historical details (food, clothes, work, language), and your character's feelings about their situation. Aim for around 200-250 words.

