

## A Roman Townhouse

In Roman times, wealthy families lived in large townhouses called a domus. These impressive homes were carefully designed, with most rooms built around a central hall known as the atrium. The atrium had an opening in the roof called a compluvium, which let in light and air. Rainwater fell through this opening into a shallow pool below, called the impluvium. This water was collected and used by the household.

Beyond the atrium was a room called the tablinum, which was the owner's study or office where he met visitors and conducted business. Further inside, many homes had a beautiful garden courtyard called a peristyle, surrounded by columns.

Floors were decorated with mosaics — pictures and patterns made from thousands of tiny tiles. Walls were painted with colourful scenes of animals, gardens, and myths.

Wealthy Romans relied on slaves to run their households. Slaves cooked, cleaned, and cared for the children. Poorer Romans could not afford a domus and lived in crowded apartment blocks called insulae.

## Questions

1. What was a Roman townhouse called?
2. What was the central hall of the house called?
3. What was the opening in the roof of the atrium called?
4. What happened to the rainwater that fell through the roof?
5. What was the tablinum used for?
6. What was a peristyle?
7. What were mosaics made from?
8. What kinds of scenes were painted on the walls?
9. What were the apartment blocks where poorer Romans lived called?
10. Why do you think the Romans collected rainwater in the impluvium?



Text B Quiz



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