



# Romans

## Gods and Goddesses



# Roman Religion

In the earlier Roman times, the Roman people believed in many different gods and goddesses whom they believed controlled different aspects of their lives.

They did not have a central belief system of their own as such, but rather borrowed gods, rituals and superstitions from a number of sources and adapted them to suit their own needs. The Romans believed in good and bad omens and they performed many rituals in the hope of receiving good luck. Prayer and sacrifice was important and the Romans held festivals every month to honour the gods. They would worship their gods and goddesses at temples.



# Elements of Religion

The previous slide includes information about Roman religion. What do these words mean? You can use dictionaries to help you. Why did the Romans have/do these things?

omen

prayer

ritual

superstition

sacrifice

festivals

worship



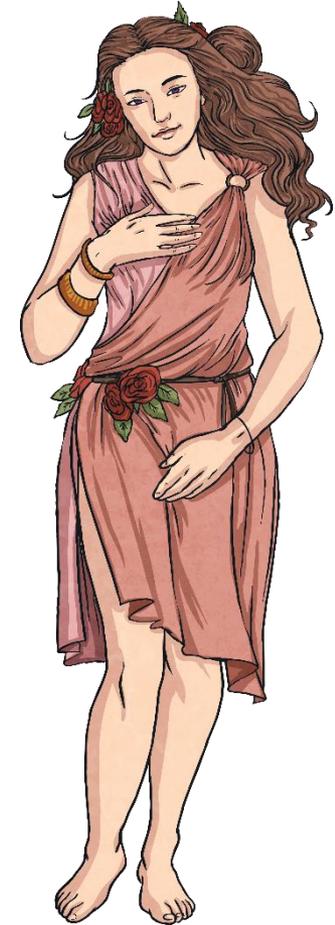
# Roman Gods and Goddesses

The Romans had lots of gods and goddesses. Many of their gods and goddesses are the same as the Greek gods, but with different names. They make things very confusing! We are going to look at some of the more popular Roman gods and goddesses. If they sound familiar, the table on the following slide might help you to recognise the Greek gods and goddesses of the same name.



Aphrodite

or...



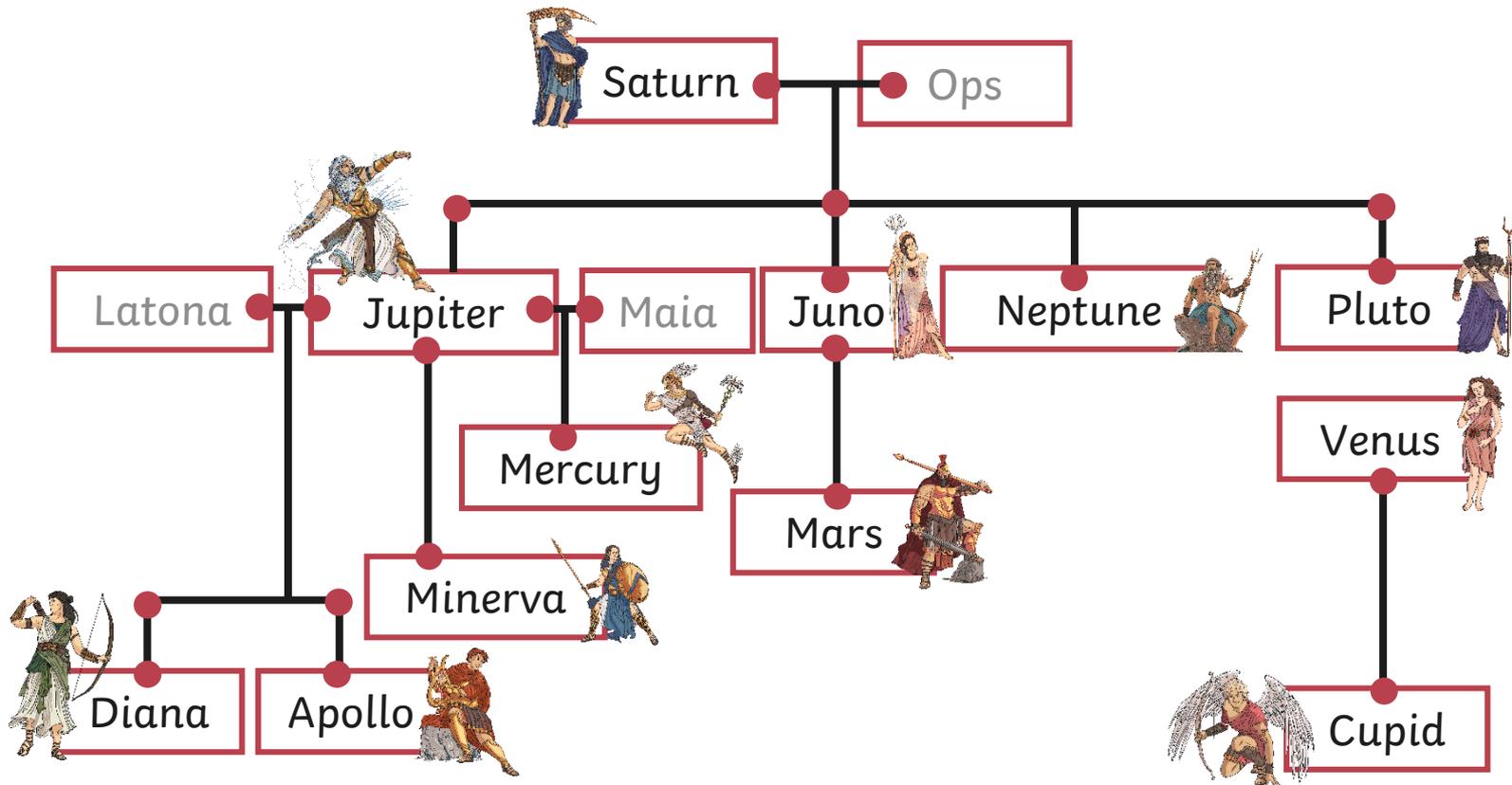
Venus?

# Comparing Gods

Roman God	Greek God	God/Goddess of...
Saturn	Cronus	God of Time
Jupiter	Zeus	King of the Gods
Juno	Hera	Queen of the Gods
Neptune	Poseidon	God of the Sea
Pluto	Hades	God of the Underworld
Minerva	Athena	Goddess of Wisdom
Mars	Ares	God of War
Venus	Aphrodite	Goddess of Love
Mercury	Hermes	Messenger to the Gods
Apollo	Apollo	God of the Sun
Diana	Artemis	Goddess of the Moon
Cupid	Eros	God of Love

# A God Family Tree

Most of the gods and goddesses were related to each other. Have a look at this family tree to see how our twelve gods and goddesses were linked.



# Gods and Goddesses Details

Now let's have a closer look at some of the Roman gods.



## Saturn: God of Time

Father of Jupiter, Pluto, Neptune,  
Juno, Ceres and Vesta  
Married to Ops, Mother Goddess



- Saturn was the first **King of the Gods**. When he died, the world was split between his three sons. Neptune ruled the seas, Pluto the underworld, and Jupiter the skies/heavens.
- Saturn's weapon was a scythe.
- He is sometimes called **Old Father Time**.
- Saturn's children, Jupiter, Neptune and Pluto, represent air, water and death, the three things that Time cannot kill.
- He used to be known as the god of agriculture, or seed sowing, but the celebration of the **Saturnalia** festival in December each year led to him being associated with time.
- The Saturnalia lasted seven days, and was similar to our Christmas today.

# Jupiter, King of the Gods, God of the Heavens

Son of Saturn

Brother of Pluto and Neptune

Married to Juno, who was also his sister



- Jupiter was the most powerful god.
- He rode a winged horse called **Pegasus**, who carried the thunderbolts that Jupiter used as weapons.
- He had an **eagle** as his messenger.
- Jupiter had twelve gods as his special advisors.
- He had many children, all of whom had special powers.
- Jupiter could shape shift (make his body look like something else, like an animal), and throw his voice.
- Jupiter means 'Father Jove'.

# Juno, Queen of the Gods

Married to Jupiter  
Mother of Mars, Natio, Juventas and  
Vulcan



- Juno was the beloved goddess of marriage, worshipped as a housewife, mother and matron.
- Although Juno watched over all Roman women, her special concern was Roman **married women**.
- There was a festival every year on the 1st March to honour Juno.

# Neptune - God of the Sea

## Brother of Jupiter and Pluto



- Neptune had deep blue eyes and green hair.
- His weapon was a **trident**, which had three prongs.
- He rode a dolphin or a horse.
- Neptune was very powerful, people were very scared of him.
- He had very bad moods and this would affect the seas. Angry seas were dangerous so people brought gifts to the temple to try and please him.
- Neptune was also god of earthquakes, known as **The Earth-shaker**.

# Pluto – God of the Underworld

Brother of Jupiter and Neptune



- Pluto ran the Underworld.
- The Underworld was where Romans believed your soul went when you died. If you were good, you would go to a nice part of the underworld. However, if you were bad, then it wasn't very pleasant.
- Pluto had a golden chariot.
- He had a helmet that would make you invisible.
- He had a three headed dog called Cerberus.

# Minerva – Goddess of Wisdom

Daughter of Jupiter



- Minerva was born without a mother. Minerva was born directly out of Jupiter's brain. According to mythology, Jupiter had a terrible headache and Vulcan split his head open only for Minerva to jump out, in full armour!
- Minerva was also the Goddess of **women's work**.
- She sat on the council of 12 gods.
- It was Minerva's wisdom that helped Perseus kill Medusa, the monster with snakes for hair.
- She was very good with horses.

# Mars – God of War

## Son of Juno



- Just as Minerva was born without a mother, Mars was born without a father.
- Mars liked bloodshed, he didn't care who won or lost a battle.
- Nobody liked him very much, he was cruel and very vain.
- He travelled with Discordia, the spirit of Disagreement, and also the spirits of Pain, Panic, Famine and Oblivion.
- Festivals to honour Mars happen in March as this is when wars would start again, having stopped over winter.
- His sacred animals are the wolf and the woodpecker.

## Venus – Goddess of Love and Beauty



- According to myth, Venus was born from sea foam.
- She represents **water**, essential to life and contrasting with Vulcan and Mars who were gods of fire and war.
- She was very beautiful and many statues and paintings of her were made.
- Her sign was a **rose**.
- She started the Trojan War, but not deliberately.

# Mercury – Messenger to the Gods

Son of Jupiter and Maea  
(or Maia)



- Mercury was the youngest son of Jupiter.
- He was very mischievous and everyone loved him.
- He was intelligent and very quick so he made a good messenger.
- He had a winged hat and sandals so he could fly.
- He carried a staff which had wings and two snakes curled round it.
- His job was to tell the Gods about everything that was happening.
- He was a very good negotiator and could talk his way out of trouble.

# Apollo – God of the Sun

Son of Jupiter and Latona  
Twin brother of Diana



- Apollo was also the **God of Music**.
- He and his twin sister were the magical children of Latona. He was born on a floating island because Juno was jealous of his mother and had banished her.
- Every day he took four horses and his chariot and pulled the sun across the sky to give light to the world.
- Apollo was very protective of his mother.
- His weapon was a bow and arrow.
- His instrument was a lyre.
- He is associated with laurel trees and laurel wreaths because Cupid made him fall in love with a woman who turned herself into a laurel tree to escape him.
- He was gentle and warm, very rarely angry.

# Diana – Goddess of the Moon

Daughter of Jupiter and Latona  
Twin sister of Apollo



- Diana could be cold and unfriendly.
- Like Apollo, she had a bow and arrow as her weapon.
- She had floppy eared dogs that she loved very much.
- She was also **Goddess of the Hunt**.
- She was associated with wild animals and the woods. She could talk to and control animals.
- She was often pictured with her bow and arrow and her hunting dogs, or a deer.

# Cupid – God of Love

## Son of Venus



- When Cupid shot someone with a bow and arrow, they would fall in love with the very next person they saw.
- Cupid was sometimes quite mischievous.
- He was usually shown looking very young.
- Cupid had wings and he would fly around with his bow and arrow.
- He had two kinds of arrows. The golden tipped arrows made people fall in love and the lead tipped arrows made people want to run away from the next person they saw.

# Did you know?

The French days of the week are mainly named after Roman Gods.

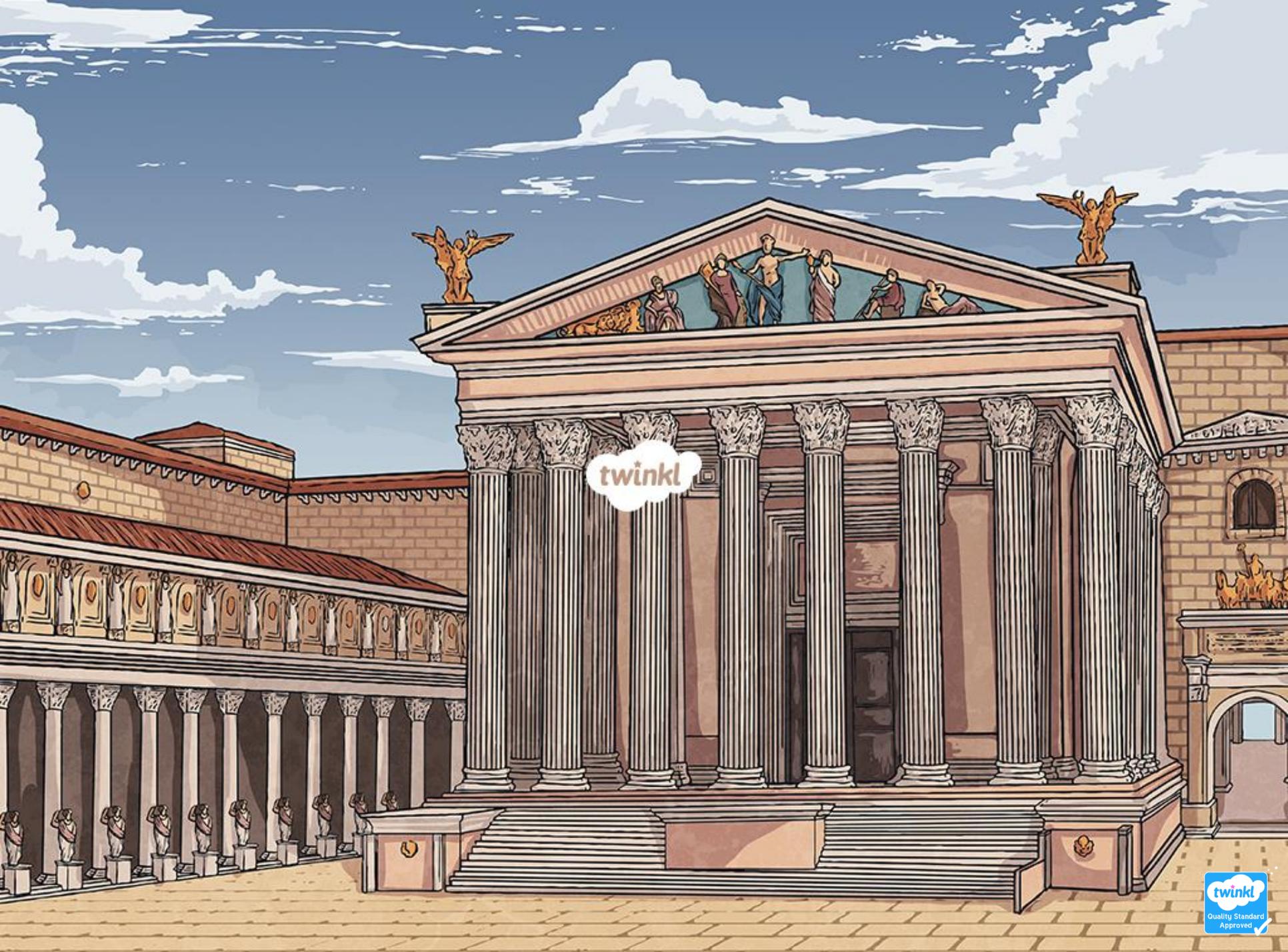
Day	God	French
Monday	Goddess of the Moon	Lundi (from 'lune')
Tuesday	Mars	Mardi
Wednesday	Mercury	Mercredi
Thursday	Jupiter (Jove)	Jeudi
Friday	Venus	Vendredi
Saturday	Saturn	Samedi
Sunday	Sun	Dimanche (from 'The Lord's Day')

Do you know what the English days of the week are named after?

# What Have You Learnt?

Can you think of an interesting fact to share?





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