Now that you have completed your first challenge and proven yourself to the archaeologists they once again need your help. They have found a new writing tablet for you to translate but this time the tablet is not complete it will be more difficult to work out what the original message might have said.

Use the alphabet translator to discover what the tablet says and then write it out in English leaving spaces for the missing words.

### ALPHABET TRANSLATOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>O</td>
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<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Roman alphabet was slightly different to ours and some letters like j, w, y and z were missing, you might have to use the closest letter you can find. For example instead of a ‘J’ you would use an ‘I’.
This mysterious ink writing tablet is not complete. It has been damaged in the ground over the nearly 2000 years it's been there, some words are easier to read than others and some are missing completely.

Write your translation below, if you can't figure out a word, or a word is missing leave space for it and come back to it later and see if you can make sense of it within the sentence.

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Check your translation on the next page.
Flavius Cerialis to his September greetings. Tomorrow, which is October 5, I will be sending you to pay for supplies for the men of my garrison. These supplies are necessary as they are the means by which we will be able to endure the winter at Vindolanda, my winter quarters, even if they are troublesome.

Missing words make it more difficult to understand the meaning and purpose of writing tablets. Sometimes we can work out what the writer meant to say from the words that make up the sentence around the missing words. Other times it could be any number of words all of which change the meaning of the piece of writing.

This letter appears to be a fragment from the commanding officer Flavius Cerialis asking for supplies from a friend. He says he will be sending something to pay for supplies. Although we have lost most of the word we can work out from the letters we can see and from the surrounding words that he had written money.

On the next leaf we are missing another word and this time we have no clues from remaining letters. What words could fit into the sentence? Make a list of all the words that could fit into the sentence. Which ones make sense with the rest of the letter? You probably still have more than one word and that is what makes reading writing tablets so difficult because one missing word can change the whole meaning of a sentence. The word that is missing has to do with the weather what do you think that it could be?
The tablet you translated is based on a real one found at Vindolanda, tablet number 234. You can find out more about this tablet and other Vindolanda writing tablets by heading to the Roman Inscriptions of Britain website.

https://romaninscriptionsofbritain.org

The word on the original tablet that was missing in ours was 'storms'.

Challenge 2

Have some more fun with missing words, try our Mad Libs writing tablet. Before you look at the next page write down 15 words below make them as strange and wacky as you like.

1. Your Name
2. Name of someone you know
3. Silly word
4. A way to greet someone
5. Number
6. Noun (person, place or thing)
7. Noun (plural)
8. Adjective (describing word)
9. Adverb ending in -ly (describes a way of doing an action)
10. Noun
11. Adjective
12. Noun (plural)
13. Adjective
14. Silly word
15. Adjective
Tomorrow, which is May 12th, I will be sending you a supply for supplies of men in my garrison. These are necessary as they are the means by which we will be able to endure the at Vindolanda. If they are I may speak with you again for a supply. I am now to take a ride on my horse. I hope this letter finds you. Farewell.

Now it's your turn...

If you were Flavius Cerialis and you were in need of supplies for your men, would you have written the letter like he did? What changes would you have made? Do you think he could have been more persuasive? Rewrite Cerialis' letter asking for supplies and explain why you have made the changes that you did.

For extra fun, write a reply to Cerialis' letter, did he get his supplies? Create your own Mad Lib from it. Find a friend or family member and act out the funny scenes together.