The archaeologists at Vindolanda have found this mysterious ink writing tablet, covered in scrawled words. As the leading expert in Roman Cursive script they need you to help them solve the mystery of what this tablet says, it may hold important clues to the past. Can you help?

Use the alphabet translator to discover what this tablet says and then write it out on the blank tablet to send back to the archaeologists.

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 and ‘I’.

ALPHABET TRANSLATOR

A B C D E F G
H I K L M N O
P Q R S T U X
The mysterious ink writing tablet would have been written almost 2000 years ago. Using a wooden pen with an iron nib which you would have dipped into the ink and used to write the message.

Nicer and brother to their cousin. Be part brother that what you are about to do will be most successful. You are most worthy to perform this task.

Good luck on your mission. Farewell another to Flavius (a name) prefect of the Ninth cohort of Batavians.

Write your translation below.

Use the Roman Alphabet to write your own secret messages or have a go at writing your name. Are all the letters you need there or do you need to adjust some?
Niger and Brocchus to their Cerialis. We pray brother that what you are about to do will be most successful. You are most worthy to perform this task.

Good luck on your mission.
Farewell brother
To Flavius Cerialis
prefect of the Ninth cohort of Batavians

To Flavius Cerialis
prefect of the Ninth cohort of Batavians
Writing Tablet Mystery

Keep going! Here are some other writing tablet activities for you to try.

The tablet you translated is based on a real one found at Vindolanda, tablet number 248. 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

Did you know? This writing tablet was probably written by the same person who wrote famous birthday party invitation! Have a go at comparing the writing of your family. What differences are there and what similarities? Who has the best handwriting?

Write a modern day letter to someone inspired by the writing tablets of Vindolanda. What do they talk about? Include some modern day Latin phrases if you like. Then wait to see if you get a reply!

Here are some Latin words and phrases you might use:
- alibi = elsewhere
- carpe diem = seize the day
- et cetera (etc) = and the rest
- via = by way of
- versus = against

Or you might find some of your own to use.
Pick a writing tablet found at Vindolanda, it could be the birthday party invitation or the strength report and using the comic strip below draw and write the events that lead up to the writing tablet being written. Use your imagination and the characters from the tablets to fill in the story around a tablet. For instance what mission was Flavius Cerialis setting out on?

Title: