

Timgad

On land | Algeria | 100 CE-7th century | Grades 3-5

Name _____ Date _____

Timgad was built on a grid so neat that you can see its city blocks from the air.

Read the story

Around 100 CE, Roman Emperor Trajan founded Timgad as a home for retired soldiers. Planners laid it out like a Roman army camp, with two main streets crossing in the middle and a grid of square blocks.

The town grew quickly, spreading beyond its first walls. It had a forum, a theater for about 3,500 people, more than a dozen public baths, a market, and even a public library, which was rare.

Later, Timgad became an important Christian center. In the 400s, Vandals and raiders from the mountains attacked. The Byzantines built a fort here, but by the 600s the city was emptied. Sand from the Sahara blew in and covered it.

How it ended

Raids in the 400s weakened Timgad, and after the Byzantine period it was abandoned by the 600s. Desert sand slowly buried it, which preserved its streets until they were dug out in the 1880s.

Key words

- grid: a pattern of straight lines crossing to make squares
- veteran: a person who has served in the military
- forum: the main public square of a Roman town

Wow facts

- Timgad had a public library, which was rare for a Roman town.
- Game boards are still scratched into the forum's stone floor.
- Sand buried the city so well that it is sometimes called the Pompeii of Africa.

Talk about it

1. Would you rather live in a town with a grid or with winding streets? Why?

2. The carving says hunting, bathing, playing and laughing is living. What would you put on your list?

Try this

Draw a map of Timgad as it looked at its busiest. Label three things people did there.

Quick quiz

Circle the best answer.

1. Which emperor founded Timgad?

- A. Trajan
- B. Julius Caesar
- C. Constantine
- D. Nero

2. Who were Timgad's first settlers?

- A. Retired soldiers
- B. Pirates
- C. Pharaohs
- D. Vikings

3. What buried Timgad?

- A. Volcanic ash
- B. Sahara sand
- C. Ice
- D. A flood

Go further

Open ruinscape.live/timgad/ for photos, the Then and Now picture where there is one, and links to museum collections and research. On the globe, Lyra Kael can fly the class there and answer questions.

Answer key (for teachers)

1. A. Trajan founded it around 100 CE.
2. A. It was built as a home for retired Roman soldiers.
3. B. Desert sand blew in and covered the city.