

POP-UP POMPEII VILLA



Purpose of activity: A hands-on way to learn about the amazing wall paintings found in the villas of Pompeii.

Target age group: Ages 9-14

Materials needed: Copies of the pattern pages on card stock, copies of the mural/mosaic pages (color copies), really good glue stick (the kind made for adults to use with scrapbooks), white glue (the good kind, not school glue!), any kind of coloring supplies you want to use (colored pencils, watercolor paints, acrylic craft paints and the various tools you will need to use them--brushes, table coverings, paper towels, etc.), and scissors.

Time needed: At least an hour. With older student who want to work carefully and paint a very artistic background, allow more like 90 minutes or more. (You could do this project in two shorter sessions.)

Introduction:

The paper villa in this project is a composite of buildings, mosaics and wall murals from Pompeii. It represents one of the smaller villas in the area. Many villas were more elaborate, with columns and courtyards. The pictures shown here are known as “Villa Boscoreale.” The most famous wall paintings from Pompeii are found mostly in the more elaborate villas, but I think paintings were found in this one as well.



If your students have never seen the wall murals inside the villas of Pompeii, Google image search can provide you with lots of examples. (YouTube also has a short video clip of Rick Steve's quick tour through Pompeii, which is very helpful.) Also, you might want to search for images of "dogs of Pompeii." Along with people, dogs also died in the tragedy. Apparently the people of Pompeii loved dogs. Dogs are still a significant feature of Pompeii today; "wild" dogs roam the streets of Pompeii. (They are well cared for and are friendly.)

You might also want to search for images of floor mosaics. Roman floor mosaics were spectacular works of art. (A mosaic is made of tiny pieces of stone or ceramic tile embedded in grout.)

How to start:

First, make copies of the black and white pattern pages on heavy card stock paper. Print out the murals and mosaics using a color printer. For best results, get them printed at a print center such as Office Depot or Office Max. I have a reasonably good laser color printer in my basement, but the professionally printed copies were, I must admit, even nicer than those I printed at home.

The first decision you must make is what medium you would like to use to color your villa and the background. (You do have the option of leaving it black and white, if you wish.) My students produced very nicely colored villas using a variety of media. Any media is fine as long as the students are patient and work carefully.

Colored pencil is probably the most time consuming (if done well), but it is the least messy. It's hard to get an even application of pencil on the exterior walls, but pencil is great if you want to do a textured stone or brick wall. It makes adding extra details fairly easy (like people or flowers or trees).

Watercolor is the fastest but can be challenging in its own way (dries too fast to blend colors, can leave blotchy marks on the paper, must be done quickly). The quick-dry aspect of watercolor makes it the right choice for many situations, however, and large areas can be covered quickly if you use a large brush. You can add pencil details on top of watercolor once the paint is completely dry.

Acrylic paints can be used, but the students must be instructed about how to use them in such a way that they do not obscure details such as the roof tile pattern. Acrylics can be used right out of the bottle for a thick, opaque look, or they can be thinned with water and be used more like watercolor. Acrylics dry quickly, just like water color. A combination of acrylic techniques can be used, choosing the opaque option for the exterior walls, sky or grass, and the more transparent option for the roof, patio or grape vines. It just depends on whether you want the lines to show through.

Recommendations for coloring:

Do all the coloring before you cut out the pieces. Cutting out the pieces first will make it harder to determine which side of the walls are interior/exterior, which might add confusion during the assembly process.

If you want to add some artistic depth to the picture, make the top of Mt. Vesuvius a sort of light purple, then blend it into a bluish green toward the base. Use bluer greens in the background, and yellower greens in the foreground. Also, vary your greens if you can--don't use just one shade.

NOTE: At this point you may also want to think about adding extra features. If you want to draw additional figures or plants, go ahead and draw/paint them now so you will have them done when you begin to assemble the villa. (You don't have to use those provided. You can draw your own.) Look at the pictures of the finished villa to figure out where you might want to put your extra features. (You don't have to add any extras, though--it is completely up to you.)

Cutting out your pieces:

After you have finished coloring your pieces, cut them out. You will notice that the background page does not require any cutting at all.

Folding the pieces:

Fold on dashed lines. For the pieces of the villa, fold the tabs so that they will be on the inside of the building. Fold the background page in half exactly on the line across the middle, on the line that looks like the

base of the villa. If you make sure this fold is exact, your project will be easier to assemble. This holds true for all folds. Students often do not realize how important it is to be exact with their folds. The more exact they are, the easier the assembly will be. You may want to “score” the fold lines first, using a ruler and either the tip of a compass or a scissor blade. (A compass point is ideal for scoring.) Scoring just means scraping the line lightly, pressing hard enough to leave a scratch but not so hard that you rip or cut or tear the paper. Fold lines that are scored bend very neatly and exactly. If you are using the craft with younger students, you might consider scoring their fold lines for them. Folding accurately and neating (without scoring) is very difficult for students under the age of about 10.

Gluing on the murals:

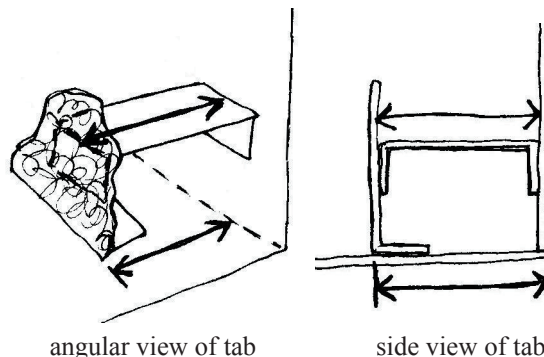
The next step is to glue the murals to the inside walls of the villa. The two square murals fit nicely on the end walls. (The wall with the window painted on it is very famous. Put this one on the end wall that does not have the door.) Cut out the squares, use a glue stick to put them onto the inside of the walls, then do any trimming necessary, such as inside the doorway and across the slanted roof lines. You can fit two of the rectangular pieces on each side wall. You’ll only need four of the six rectangular pieces provided.

Glue a mosaic on the floor of the villa. There are four options provided, but you’ll only need one. If you are printing for a group, you don’t need to print a mosaic sheet for each student-- they can share.

Final assembly:

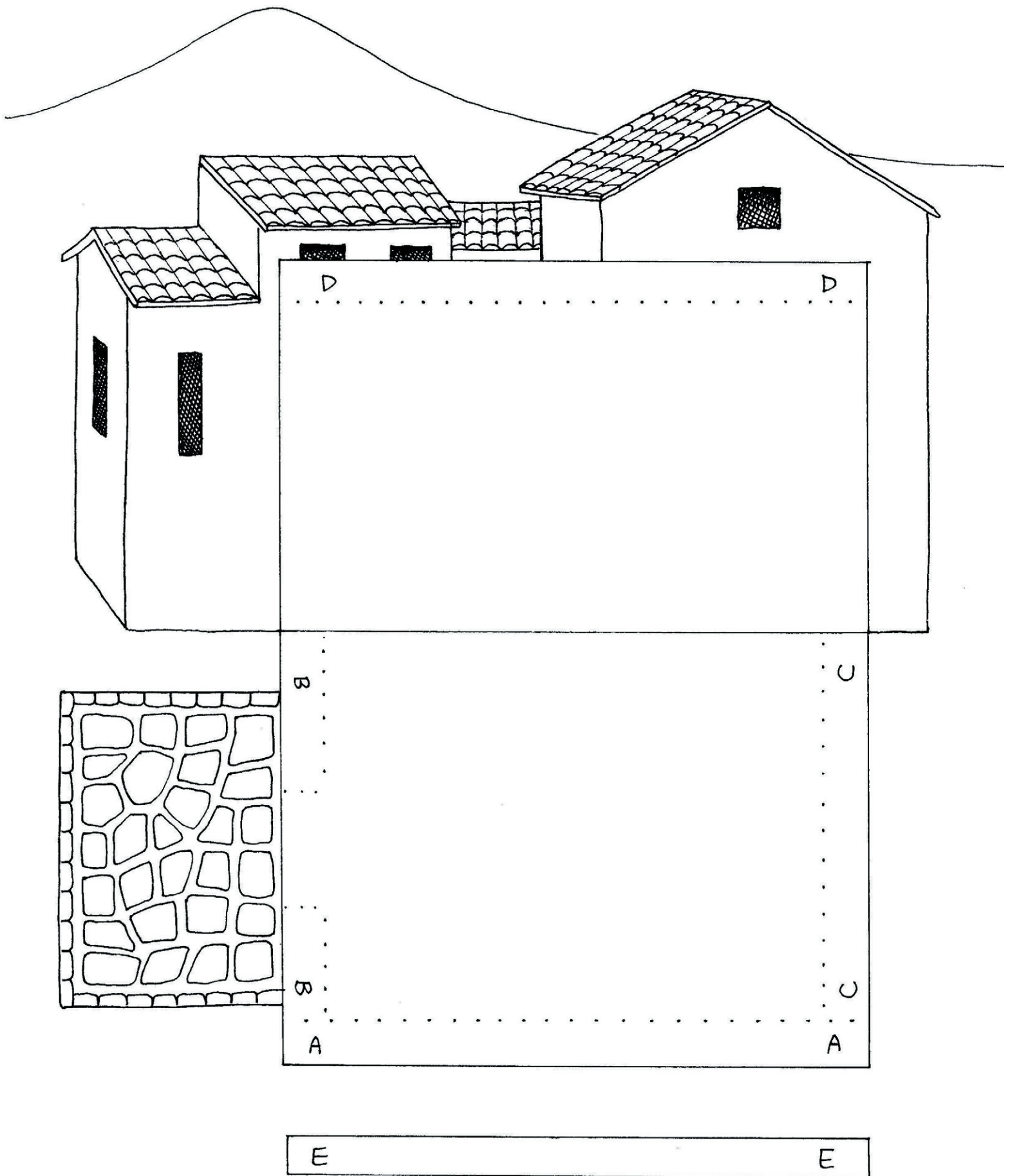
Glue the walls in place first. There are letters on the tabs to help you get them in the right place. Put the glue on the side of the tabs that has the letters. If you are using white glue, make sure you don’t use too much. Glue should not seep out on the sides. If it does, you are using too much glue. If you are using a glue stick, make sure not to skimp on glue. (And make sure you are using a good quality glue stick.) Press and hold the tabs in place for at least a minute. Glue the roof tab (D) to the back wall. Press and hold. Fold back the tab that says “Glue to underside of roof” and then apply glue to it. Now you are going to fold the whole project in half, (at the middle crease line that you already made) so that the roof lays flat--it will stick out beyond the background paper several centimeters. (The end walls can be either lying out to the side, or be lying on the floor of the villa.) Press the roof onto the glued tab. Press this seam for about 30 minutes or until you think it is securely fastened. You don’t want to open the paper too soon. When dry, open the project and the villa should pop right up. The end walls will just get popped up into place. The fit should be exact enough that the end walls will stay upright just from the slight pressure of being pressed into the opening. This way they can be pull in and out very easily.

Finally, add any extra details. The grapevines obviously go on the area marked E. You will need to add a tab behind it to make it pop up. Cut on or two of the tabs and glue it in place as shown. Do the same for the child and dog, the tree or any other feature you want to add. The guideline on tabs is to make sure that the length of the tab (not including the folded down ends) measures the same as the distance between the base of the figure and the back wall. As long as these distances are the same and the tab is kept parallel to the bottom, the figure should fold down nicely when the project is closed.

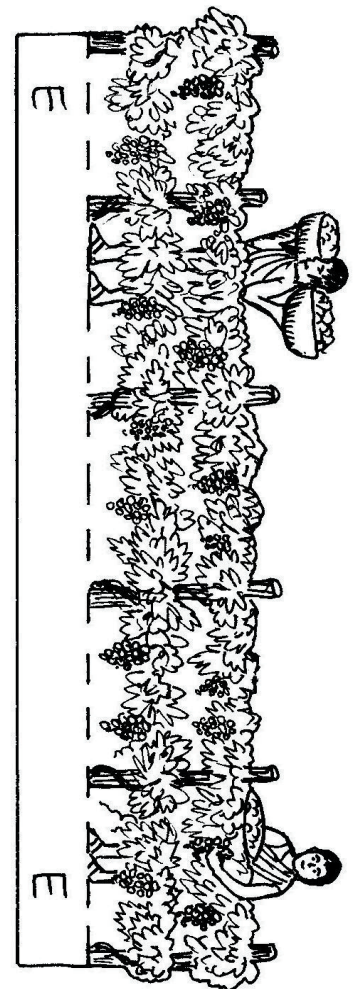
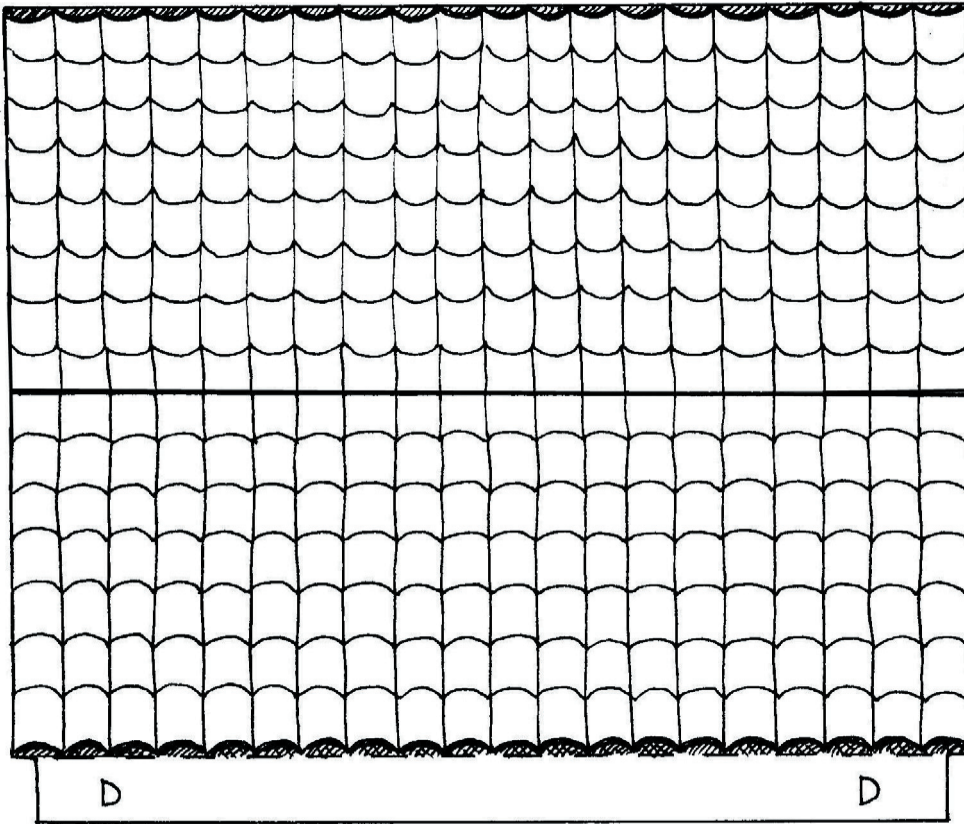
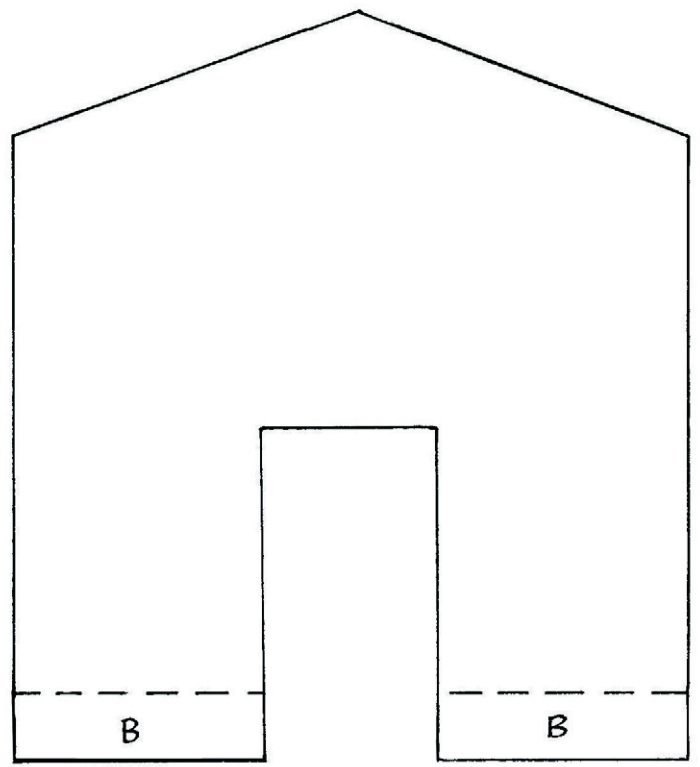
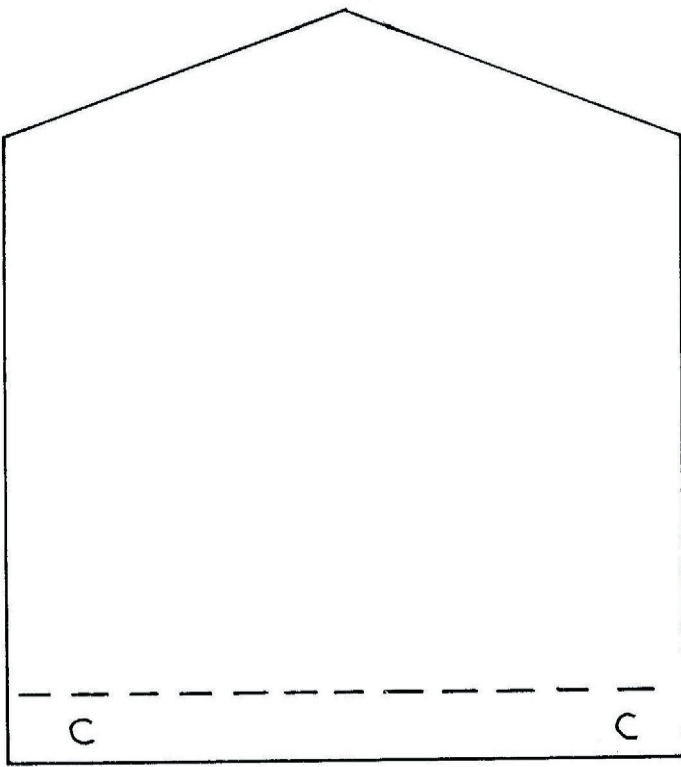


For video demonstrations of these assembly steps, go to [YouTube.com/TheBasementWorkshop](https://www.youtube.com/TheBasementWorkshop), and click on the “Project Demos” playlist. There are three assembly videos posted there.



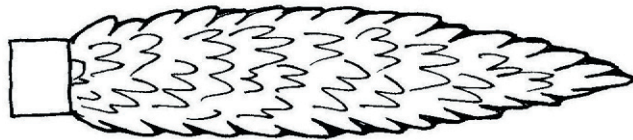


A small villa near Pompeii before 79 AD, with Mt. Vesuvius looming in the background.



A
Glue to floor of house

Glue to underside of roof



You can use this space for any extra details you want to add. Or you can use it as a piece of scrap paper to test your paints or pencils.

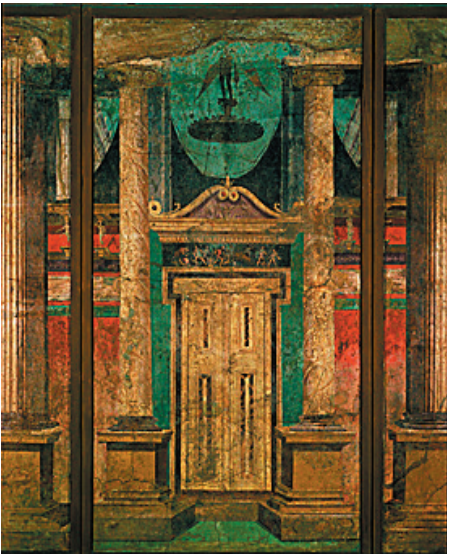


My suggestion for back wall (no door). This is probably the most famous wall painting in Pompeii. Trim picture to fit wall.



My suggestion for back of wall that has the door in it. You can trace the door wall on top of this then cut to fit.

Choose four of these murals to put on the side walls. (All of these murals are from Pompeii.)





This mosaic was actually uncovered in an archaeological dig in Israel.



This mosaic was part of a Roman kitchen floor. The pattern is designed to look like the cook dropped a lot of things on the floor. So one more won't be noticed!

FLOOR MOSAICS

Here are some floor mosaic patterns you might want to use on the floor of your villa. The people of Pompeii loved dogs. There are several mosaics in Pompeii that say, "Cave Canem," meaning, "Beware of the Dog." ("Cave" is pronounced "cah-way.") They also loved sea creatures.