

Costuming an imperial bust

The cuirass -- Many of the emperors on students' coins are shown wearing a cuirass, or armored breastplate. The same costume stores that sell Roman helmets will probably also sell plastic Roman armor. Although there were several types of Roman breastplate and you may not be able to make a very good match with what's seen on the coins, students will enjoy seeing whatever you bring in and will probably be willing to try it on.



Discussion of breastplates can also lead to an interesting digression, if you want to show pictures of the famous Prima Porta statue of Augustus (this photo is courtesy of VRoma.org):



The cloak -- Some coins show the emperor "draped," or wearing a cloak secured by a large pin on one shoulder. Two or three yards of fabric will create the effect, either something like an old sheet or a bargain remnant from a fabric store. The softer the drape, the better. For even greater verisimilitude, look for something reddish-purple in color. As for the pin, any kind of big brooch will do.



The cloak and cuirass -- A third common bust variation is to show the emperor "draped and cuirassed," with a cloak over a breastplate.

