

# Roman Britain (2)

This chapter continues the chronological narrative of British history. Having learned about the invasion of Britain by the Romans, children explore what life was like in Roman Britain, for both Romans and Celts. They consider the impact of Roman technology, culture and beliefs and form their own opinions regarding whether this impact was positive or negative. Finally, they are given the opportunity to frame their own historically valid questions as they create an end-of-year project or presentation on a theme of their choice around the topic.

## Chapter at a glance

### Curriculum objectives

• The Roman Empire and its impact on Britain, including 'Romanisation' of Britain: sites such as Caerwent and the impact of technology, culture and beliefs, including early Christianity; successful invasion by Claudius and conquest, including Hadrian's Wall.

| Week                     | Lesson | Summary of activities  | Expected outcomes   |
|--------------------------|--------|--|---|
| 1                        | 1      | • Children discuss the role of local government in Roman Britain, comparing it to government today.                        | • Can describe the way Roman Britain was organised.   |
|                          | 2      | • Children write a diary entry describing life in a Romano-British town.   | • Can describe life in a town in Roman Britain.   |
| 2                        | 1      | • Children work in groups to build a groma surveying tool and use it to mark straight lines.                               | • Can describe the construction of Roman roads in Britain.  |
|                          | 2      | • Children complete a comprehension exercise about the spread of early Christianity and Saint Alban.                       | • Can describe the beginnings of early Christianity in Britain.                                     |
| 3                        | 1      | • Children write about some of the advantages and disadvantages for the Celts of Roman rule.                               | • Can describe how life for the Celts changed under Roman rule.                                     |
|                          | 2      | • Children investigate Roman archaeological sites in the UK via the internet.  | • Can understand how archaeological sites like Caerwent give us information about the Roman period. |
| 4                        | 1      | • Children discuss why Hadrian's Wall was constructed then create their own Hadrian's Wall quiz.                           | • Can describe why Hadrian's Wall was built.  |
|                          | 2      | • Children explore the Vindolanda tablets before writing a letter from the viewpoint of a Roman soldier at Hadrian's Wall. | • Can describe what life might have been like for a soldier on a Hadrian's wall fort.               |
| 5                        | 1      | • Children visit a local Roman site to make observations.  | • Can describe a Roman site in their local area.  |
|                          | 2      | • Children select a topic and create a plan for an independent project or presentation on the theme of Roman Britain.      | • Can create a presentation about an aspect of Romano-British life.                                 |
| 6                        | 1      | • Children continue work on their project or presentation on the theme of Roman Britain.                                   | • Can create a presentation about an aspect of Romano-British life.                                 |
|                          | 2      | • Children complete and share their project or presentation on the theme of Roman Britain.                                 | • Can present their own information about an aspect of Romano-British life.                         |
| <b>Assess and review</b> |        | • To review the half-term's work.  |   |



### Expected prior learning

- This chapter is a continuation of the topic of Roman Britain. Children should be familiar with the life of the Iron Age Celts prior to the Roman invasion. They should also be familiar with the main events of the invasion, British resistance and where the Romans settled.
- Children should also have covered the chapter on Rome and its empire, and therefore be familiar with Roman domestic life, customs, religion and military strength.



### Overview of progression

- Children will develop their understanding of the themes of cause, consequence and change as they consider the impact of the 'Romanisation' of Britain – both negative and positive consequences.
- They will develop their understanding of the use of archaeological evidence as they examine Roman sites such as Caerwent, the Roman baths at Bath, Hadrian's Wall and Vindolanda fort, and artefacts such as the Vindolanda tablets. Optionally, they pay a visit to a Roman site within their local area to make observations.
- They are also given the opportunity to devise and research their own historically valid questions in an end-of-year project. More confident learners will be able to draw comparisons between Roman and modern times and analyse trends over time, considering the legacy of the Romans today.



### Creative context

Cross-curricular opportunities include:

- building a groma surveying tool, which enabled Romans to build straight or perpendicular roads;
- a reading comprehension; writing a diary; letter writing; researching a project; speaking and listening.



### Background knowledge

- After Boudica's rebellion, the Romans and Celts settled into a largely peaceful coexistence. Many Celtic tribal kings were involved in the local government of their regions and enjoyed the technology and luxurious lifestyle the Romans brought with them.
- The 'Romanisation' of Britain included building a network of roads, facilitating travel and trade and enabling speedy mobilisation of the Roman army. Roman towns brought new culture and technologies such as aqueducts for fresh water supplies, public baths and good sanitation.
- Evidence of the Roman period exists in many archaeological sites around Britain, including Hadrian's Wall. Although the Romans ruled most of Britain, they'd had difficulty keeping the Picts in Caledonia (Scotland) under control. The popular belief is that Hadrian's Wall was built for the purpose of controlling people passing back and forth across the border of the Roman Empire and preventing raids on Roman property.
- At Vindolanda, one of the forts along Hadrian's Wall, a number of handwritten tablets were discovered in 1973. These provide snippets of army life in Roman Britain.
- Today, the legacy of the Romans can be seen in many aspects of British life, including: our language; Christianity; coins (originally featuring the head of the Emperor); local government and taxation; and Britain's network of roads, many of which follow the old Roman routes.

## Week 1 lesson plans

This week focuses on when and why the Romans invaded Britain. Children develop their skills in using timelines as they create a timeline of the important events in Romano-British history. They then explore what historians believe to be the main reasons the Romans chose to invade Britain.

### Lesson objectives

- To know about the Roman Empire and its impact on Britain, including 'Romanisation' of Britain: the impact of technology, culture and beliefs.
- To develop a chronologically secure knowledge and understanding of British, local and world history, establishing clear narratives within and across the periods they study.
- To note connections, contrasts and trends over time and develop the appropriate use of historical terms.
- To regularly address and sometimes devise historically valid questions about change, cause, similarity and difference, and significance.

### Expected outcomes

- All children will know that the Romans controlled Britain through local government.
- Most children will describe the basic system of local government in Roman Britain.
- Some children will consider the benefits of the Roman system of local government and compare it with government today.

### Resources

Interactive activity 'How was Roman Britain organised?' on the CD-ROM

## 1: How was Roman Britain organised?

### Introduction

- Discuss the structure of British local government today (for example, explain that the national government is responsible for major decisions affecting the country, such as defence, health and foreign affairs, while local government is responsible for decisions in their area, such as libraries, waste disposal, local roads and schools).

### Whole-class work

- Ask: *What do you think were some of the problems the Romans faced when they started their rule in Britain?* (Answers could include: Celtic rebellions; lack of knowledge of the land, language, people; different climate; no infrastructure, compared to what they were used to.)

### Group work

- Divide the children into groups and ask them to complete the missing words activity in interactive activity 'How Was Roman Britain organised?' on the CD-ROM. This activity provides some information about how the Romans governed, pacified the Celts, collected taxes and kept law and order.
- Ask the children to discuss these questions:
  - Why was it a clever idea to involve the wealthy Celts in the governing process?
  - How might the ordinary Celts have felt about their kings being involved in local Roman government?
  - What similarities and differences are there between the way the Romans organised Britain and the way it is organised today?

### Differentiation

- Support: mixed-ability groupings may be beneficial; children could work in a small group, sharing their ideas with adult support.
- Challenge: children could be encouraged to consider some of the wider questions, such as the morality of the use of capital punishment versus its potential effectiveness as a deterrent of crime.

### Review

- Discuss the answers to the questions as a class. By the end of the discussion the children should be aware that: involving wealthy Celts in the governing process meant that they were less likely to rebel against it and more likely to benefit from the system, and that once the wealthy Celts were on side, they would have brought the rest of the tribe with them; ordinary Celts may have felt suspicious when their kings and queens became involved in government, but this might also have reassured them that they could live peacefully with the Romans and even benefit from the knowledge and technology they brought with them; like the ancient Romans, modern government also uses a system of taxation to pay for public services, with each region having its own local government, but capital punishment is no longer used.
- Ask the following additional questions if time allows: *Why don't you think the governor was put in charge of his area's finances? Do you think the tax system was fair?*

**Lesson objectives**

- To know about the Roman Empire and its impact on Britain.
- To develop a chronologically secure knowledge and understanding of British, local and world history, establishing clear narratives within and across the periods they study.

**Resources**

Interactive activity 'Y4 Summer 2 quiz' on the CD-ROM

**Lesson objectives**

- To know about the Roman Empire and its impact on Britain.
- To construct informed responses that involve thoughtful selection and organisation of relevant historical information.

**Resources**

Children's Roman Britain projects or presentations

**Roman Britain quiz (2)****Revise**

- Hold a class debate around the following question: *Overall, was the Roman invasion and settlement a good or bad thing for Britain?*

**Assess**

- Ask the children to complete interactive activity 'Y4 Summer 2 quiz' on the CD-ROM, in which they answer multiple-choice questions covering the chapter content.
- Give children a set length of time (for example, 15 minutes) to answer the questions. This can be used as part of a formal assessment or as a fun challenge activity, giving children the opportunity to show what they have learned about the topic.
- Less confident readers may need adult support to read the questions aloud.

**Further practice**

- Ask the children to discuss or write down a list of similarities and differences between the ancient Greek and ancient Roman civilisations.

**Roman Britain project review****Revise**

- As a class, come up with a list of sub-topics the children have covered under the overall topic of Roman Britain (for example: Celt warriors versus Roman soldiers; Julius Caesar's invasion; rebellions of Caratacus and Boudica; Hadrian's Wall; Roman roads; Roman towns).

**Assess**

- Ask the children to write a review of their own project or presentation, answering the follow questions:
  - What question did you investigate?
  - Why did you choose this topic?
  - How did you research your topic?
  - How did you organise your information?
  - What worked well?
  - How could your work have been improved?
  - What was most challenging?
  - What questions about Roman Britain would you now like to investigate?

**Further practice**

- Ask the children to devise a short drama scene, poem or mini presentation for a Roman Britain assembly.

# Life under Roman rule

- Complete the two speech bubbles with the ideas from the bottom of the page.



I hate life under the Romans because...

Life under the Romans is great because...



We are expected to worship Roman gods.

We have Roman fashion and style.

Celts can join the Roman army.

More goods are available because trade is easier.

We have sewage systems and improved hygiene.

We are expected to speak Latin.

New foods have been introduced.

We have public baths and toilets

Rich Celts want to live in Roman-style villas.

I can consider arguments for and against life under Roman rule in Britain.

How did you do?

