

Life in the Iron Age: Discoveries with Ellie

Learning objective: To understand how life in Britain changed during the Iron Age, including the development of hillforts and the use of iron tools.

Use your knowledge of Iron Age Britain to answer the questions below. Ellie the elephant has provided a word bank to help you with your historical terms.

Ellie the elephant has travelled back in time to the Iron Age. She has observed that people lived in large groups called tribes, often protected by defensive structures on hills. They used new metals to make stronger tools and jewellery, and they built their homes using wattle and daub. Think about how these changes affected their daily survival and how they interacted with one another.

Word bank: Hillfort · Iron · Roundhouse · Celts · Trade · Tribes

1. Why did Iron Age people choose to build their settlements on high ground? Explain the purpose of a hillfort. (2 marks)

2. How did the invention of iron tools improve farming compared to the tools used in the Bronze Age? (2 marks)

3. Describe the typical design and building materials of an Iron Age roundhouse. (2 marks)

4. Iron Age tribes often traded with each other. If a tribe had extra grain, what might they have wanted to trade for? Give two examples. (2 marks)

5. Imagine you are an Iron Age craftsperson. If you were making a piece of jewellery using iron or bronze, what patterns or designs might you include to show your tribal identity? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a cross-section of an Iron Age roundhouse. Make sure to label the central hearth, the wattle and daub walls, and the thatched roof.



Extension challenge: Research what the 'Celts' were known for in terms of their art. Write three sentences about why their metalwork designs were often so colourful and swirling.