

Life in Roman Britain: Challenges and Changes

Learning objective: To analyse the impact of the Roman Empire on life in Britain and evaluate how Roman innovations changed daily routines.

Read each question carefully and use your knowledge of the Roman period to provide detailed explanations. For the final questions, use your historical enquiry skills to justify your reasoning.

Ellie the elephant has been visiting the ruins of a Roman villa in the British countryside. She has discovered a complex heating system under the floor and beautiful patterns made of tiny coloured stones. Using her incredible memory, she is trying to piece together how the Romans transformed Britain from a collection of tribes into a part of a vast, organised empire.

Word bank: aqueduct · legionary · mosaic · villa · hypocaust · toga · centurion · invade

1. Explain why the Romans built a network of straight roads across Britain. How did these roads benefit the Roman army compared to the local tribes? (3 marks)

2. The 'hypocaust' was a clever Roman invention. Describe how it worked and explain why it was particularly important for people living in the cooler climate of Britain. (3 marks)

3. Compare and contrast the lifestyle of a wealthy Roman living in a villa with that of a local Briton living in a roundhouse during the Roman occupation. (4 marks)

4. If you were a Roman governor, why might you choose to introduce Roman baths and public markets to a newly conquered British town? (2 marks)

5. Justify your answer: Was the Roman influence on Britain mostly positive or negative for the people already living there? Use at least two pieces of evidence to support your view. (4 marks)

Draw: Draw a cross-section of a Roman villa floor showing the hypocaust heating system. Label the 'furnace' (furnus) where the fire was lit and the 'pillars' (pilae) that supported the floor.



Extension challenge: Imagine a Roman soldier and a local British farmer meet at a market. Write a short dialogue (150 words) between them where they discuss the changes they have noticed in their local town over the last year. Use rich, descriptive vocabulary.