

Iron Age Architect: Designing a Hillfort

Learning objective: To understand the structure and defensive features of Iron Age hillforts and the daily lives of the people who inhabited them.

Ellie the Elephant has been researching Iron Age settlements. She needs your help to plan a defensive hillfort. Use the word bank to label the key features of your design and answer the questions below to justify your engineering choices.

Word bank: ramparts · palisade · roundhouse · ditch · grain store · roundwood · defensive gateway

1. Explain why Iron Age people chose to build their settlements on high ground or hilltops. How did this provide a strategic advantage? (2 marks)

2. Compare and contrast the materials used for Iron Age roundhouses with modern houses. Why were materials like wattle and daub effective? (2 marks)

3. If you were a tribe leader, why might you choose to build a 'grain store' on raised stilts? What might happen if the grain got wet? (2 marks)

4. Justify your answer: Which defensive feature of a hillfort do you think was the most important to stop invaders? Explain your reasoning. (2 marks)

5. Max the Monkey is curious about the cost of living. If a farmer traded 12 bushels of grain for one iron sword worth £45.00, what was the value of each bushel? Show your calculation. (2 marks)

6. What might happen to the social structure of the tribe if the iron supply suddenly ran out? Consider the impact on tools, farming, and protection. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a bird's-eye view of your Iron Age hillfort. Ensure you include a central roundhouse, the defensive ramparts, and the gateway. Label these using the provided word bank.



Extension challenge: Write a short diary entry from the perspective of an Iron Age artisan living in your hillfort. Describe one task you have completed today using iron tools and explain how your life differs from those living in the earlier Bronze Age.