Life in the Iron Age with Ellie the Elephant

Learning objective: To identify and illustrate key features of an Iron Age hillfort and the daily life of people living during that period.

Ellie the Elephant is visiting an Iron Age hillfort. Use your historical knowledge to help her complete the scene by drawing and labelling the important features listed below.

Draw: Draw a large scene showing an Iron Age hillfort. The style should be clear and descriptive. Include a large, circular 'roundhouse' with a cone-shaped 'thatch' roof. Surround the village with a 'palisade' (a wooden fence) and show the earth 'ramparts' (banks) and a deep 'ditch' surrounding the settlement. Add Ellie the Elephant standing near the entrance to give the drawing scale.

Label words: Roundhouse · Rampart · Ditch · Palisade · Thatch · Hillfort

Steps:

1. Why do you think Iron Age people chose to build their homes on the top of hills? Suggest one reason.
2. Label your drawing to show where the 'rampart' and 'ditch' are located.
3. What material was commonly used for the walls of a roundhouse? (Hint: it is made of woven sticks covered in mud).
4. Draw a small fire outside one of the roundhouses. Why might this have been important for the community?

5. Look at your drawing. Describe one way the hillfort helped the people stay safe from enemies.