Life in the Iron Age with Ellie

Learning objective: To understand how people lived, farmed, and defended their homes during the British Iron Age.

Use your historical knowledge about the Iron Age to answer the following questions. Read each question carefully and think about how life changed from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age.

Ellie the elephant has been travelling through time to study the Iron Age. She has noticed that people started using iron to make stronger tools and weapons. They lived in roundhouses with walls made of wattle and daub and built large settlements on top of hills for protection. Life was busy with farming, weaving, and trading goods.

Word bank: Hillfort · Roundhouse · Iron · Hill · Ramparts · Farming · Trade · Wattle and daub

1. Why did Iron Age people choose to build their settlements on top of a hill? Explain one reason why this helped them. (2 marks)

2. Iron Age houses were often made using a technique called 'wattle and daub'. Can you describe what these materials were and why they were useful for building walls? (2 marks)

3. How did the discovery of iron change the way people lived compared to the Bronze Age? Mention one way iron was used. (2 marks)

4. Look at the list of features below. Tick the ones that were typical of an Iron Age hillfort:
- Tall stone castles
- Deep ditches and ramparts
- Roundhouses
- Motorways (2 marks)

5. Ellie found a coin in the ground. What does this tell us about how Iron Age people might have got things they could not make themselves? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a cross-section of an Iron Age hillfort. Make sure to include a roundhouse, a protective ditch, and the steep sides of the hill.

Extension challenge: Imagine you are an Iron Age farmer. Write a short diary entry (3-4 sentences) describing your day, including one job you had to do, such as harvesting grain or mending a tool.