

# Who were the Celts?

## The purpose of this lesson is:

for the children to develop a clear understanding of who the Celtic people were.

## Learning objectives

### Children should learn:

- to select and record information about Celtic ways of life;
- about aspects of life in Celtic Britain, using a variety of sources.

### Class objective:

- to find out about the Celts.

## Learning outcomes

### Children should be able to:

- select relevant information from a number of sources;
- record relevant information about the Celtic way of life.

## Programme of study

- 1a** place events, people and changes into correct periods of time;
- 2a** characteristic features of periods and societies studied, including the ideas, beliefs, attitudes and experiences of men, women and children in the past;
- 4a** find out about events, people and changes from an appropriate range of sources of information, including ICT-based sources;
- 4b** ask and answer questions, and select and record information relevant to the focus of the enquiry;
- 5a** recall, select and organize historical information.

## Prior learning

This lesson builds on the information given to the children in **Lesson 2**.

## Vocabulary

archaeologist, Beltane, Celt, Celtic, checked, cloak, daub, druids, hill fort, moustache, Samain, striped, thatch, torc, tribe, woad

## Resources

- **Resource sheet** **RS3.1**: *Information on the Celts*
- **Activity sheet** **AS3.1**: *Celtic tribes*
- **Activity sheet** **AS3.2a**, **AS3.2b**, **AS3.2c**: *Celtic man*
- **Resource sheet** **RS3.2**: *The Celts*
- Atlas
- Crayons
- Relevant objects from museum loans collections

## Introduction

- Begin the lesson by gathering the children together. Share the class objective with the children: **to find out about the Celts**. Remind the children that when the Romans came to Britain, the country was inhabited by the Celts. The Celts all belonged to the same group of people, but they were made up of several different tribes,

## Cross-curricular links

- **Geography**: Key skills (maps and mapping)

## Differentiation

There are two differentiated sheets in this lesson:

- **Activity sheet** **AS3.2a**: *Celtic man* for the less able children;
- **Activity sheet** **AS3.2c**: *Celtic man* for the more able children.

Some lower ability children may require help from an adult with the text on the activity sheet.

## Assessment opportunities

Assessment of each child's understanding of this lesson can be done by examining the correlation between his/her drawings and the written description.

## Advance preparation

Familiarize yourself with the information on the Celts provided in this lesson. The following website will provide you with further information on the Celtic tribe that lived in your area:

**[www.roman-britain.org/tribes.htm](http://www.roman-britain.org/tribes.htm)**

This website has several images of Celtic warriors, plus descriptions of clothing and weapons:

**[www.ironage.demon.co.uk/brigantia](http://www.ironage.demon.co.uk/brigantia)**

each with its own leader. (You could make comparisons here with football supporters: all of them love football, but each supporter has a special allegiance to his/her own team, and they sometimes fight with each other.)

### Activity 1 Celtic tribes

- Ask the children to go to their tables. Give out **Activity sheet AS3.1**: *Celtic tribes*. Show the children the map, explain what it shows and help them to identify the different areas. Explain to them that the

Romans conquered all these areas in turn. Check that all the children understand the activity.

### Activity 2 All about the Celts

- When the children have completed **Activity 1**, write the title '**The Celts**' on the board. Remind the children of their homework task from the previous lesson. Select individual children to provide information on the Celts. As the children give you the information, add it to the board.
- When you have sufficient information, talk to the children about how we know these facts about the Celts.

- If the children have not been able to supply you with much information on the Celts, use the information from **Resource sheet RS3.1**: *Information on the Celts*.
- Explain to the children that the Celts could not read or write, so they did not record their own history in writing. The Greek writer, Diodorus gave us a description of the Celts he met.

### Activity 3 Celtic man

- Give out the differentiated **Activity sheets AS3.2a**, **AS3.2b**, **AS3.2c**: *Celtic man*. Tell the children that they are going to use the description to complete the

drawing of their own Celtic man. Ensure that all the children understand the terms '**striped**' and '**checked**' before starting this activity.

### Plenary

- Ten minutes before the end of this lesson gather the children together. Tell them that we have other information about the Celts from a Greek merchant called Pytheas, who came to this country to buy tin.
- Read the children the following extract. (Some of the vocabulary in this extract will need some explanation.)  
**'The inhabitants of Britain, who live in the south-west, are especially friendly to strangers, and from meeting foreign traders have adopted civilized habits. It is these people who produce the tin, cleverly working on the land...The British tribes were...ruled by kings and have kept many of their ancient customs. They used chariots in war. Their dwellings or homes were made of timber and thatch; they stored grain in covered pits and granaries and brewed a drink made from corn and honey.'**
- After reading this extract, show the children the picture of a Celtic warrior on **Resource sheet RS3.2**: *The Celts*. Remind the children of their class objective: **to find out about the Celts**, and select four children to tell the class one interesting fact each about the Celts.

### Homework

- To continue the Roman project work.

### Notes/evaluation

# History

## Notes/evaluation

# Information on the Celts

## Resource sheet 3.1

The Celts were farmers who lived on small farms, in settlements of just a few houses, or in small towns on the tops of hills. We call these hill forts. The hill forts had a deep ditch around them, to protect the people inside from attack.

The Celtic houses were made of wood, with thatch or reeds on the roof. The wooden walls were covered with a mixture called daub. This was mostly clay, with straw and animal hair added to it, and some animal manure mixed in, to make sure that it would stick well to the wooden walls. A Celtic house had one large room inside it, in which the whole family lived. They cooked and slept here. The Celts kept cows, goats, pigs, chickens and sheep. They kept bees for honey, and they brewed something like beer for drinking. The sheep were kept for their wool. The wool was dyed with plant dyes in many different colours and patterns. With this wool they made their clothes, which often had checked and striped designs.

The Celts (both men and women) wore a lot of jewellery. Much of the jewellery was decorated with animal designs. The torc, which was a twisted necklace made of metal, was a favourite piece of jewellery. The men dyed their hair blond with lime and spiked it up on their heads. The Celtic warriors were very fierce fighters. They would paint their bodies blue with woad (a dye from a plant from the mustard family) before they went into battle. When they killed their enemies, they would chop off their heads and display them, either by tying them to their horses' necks, nailing them to the walls of their houses, or sticking them on poles at the entrance to the forts.

The Celts followed an old religion that believed gods and spirits were everywhere. Their priests were called druids. The druids made sacrifices to the gods for the people. Sometimes these sacrifices were human ones. After great victories, the Celts would throw objects (and sometimes animals and people) into rivers, streams or springs as gifts for the gods. The Celts had some special festivals.

**Samain:** was around the 31st of October. The Celts believed all the spirits from other worlds were let loose in our world on that night. We now celebrate this as Halloween.

**Beltane:** was on the 1st of May. This festival was to thank the gods for surviving the winter, and to ask for good crops and a good harvest. We now celebrate this as May Day.

# The Celts



**Statue of Boudicca**  
(Boadicea) 1850s (bronze) by Thomas Thornycroft (1815-85)

Victoria Embankment, London, UK/Bridgeman Art Library



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# Celtic tribes

## Activity sheet 3.1

Name: 

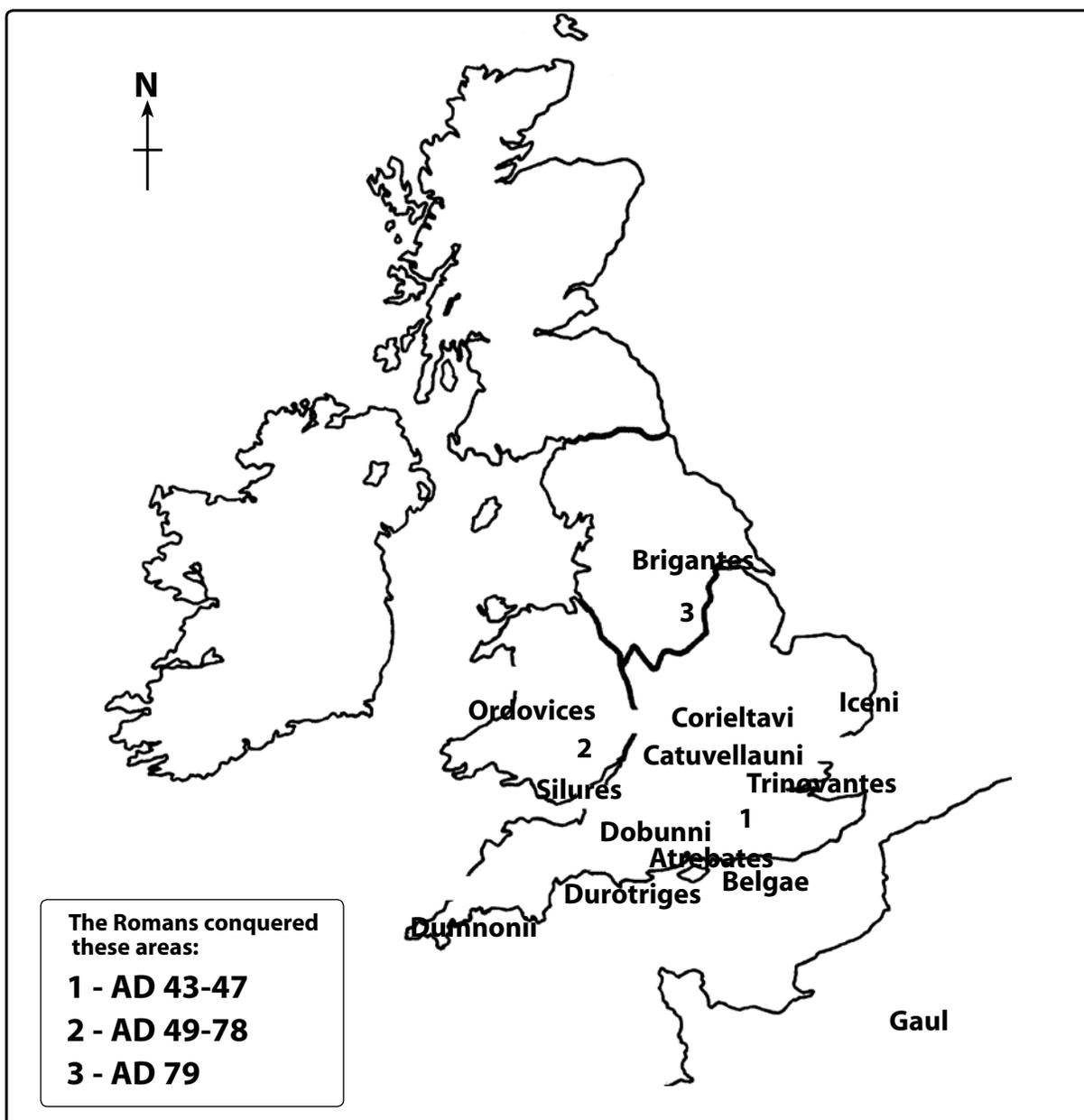
### Section 1

The Celts that inhabited Britain lived in tribes. Look at the map below to see the names of the tribes and where they lived. Colour in the following:

Area 1 = blue

Area 2 = green

Area 3 = red



### Section 2

To which Celtic tribe would you have belonged?

# Celtic man

## Activity sheet 3.2a

Name: 

**Diodorus, a Greek historian, wrote this description of the Celtic men.**

They are very tall, with white skin. Their hair is blond and thick and shaggy, like a horse's mane. They shave their cheeks but leave a moustache. They wear brightly-coloured shirts with trousers, and cloaks fastened at the shoulder with a brooch. These cloaks are striped or checked in design, and in different colours.

**Use the description to complete this picture of a Celtic man.**

**You will need to add: 1) hair; 2) a moustache; 3) jewellery. Then colour in his clothes with checks and stripes.**



# Celtic man

## Activity sheet 3.2b

Name: 

**Diodorus, a Greek historian, wrote this description of the Celtic men.**

They are very tall, with rippling muscles and clear, white skin. Their hair is blond and thick and shaggy, like a horse's mane. They shave their cheeks, but leave a moustache that covers the whole mouth. They wear brightly-coloured shirts with trousers, and cloaks fastened at the shoulder with a brooch. These cloaks are striped or checked in design, and in various colours.

**Use the description to complete this picture of a Celtic man.**



# Celtic man

## Activity sheet 3.2c

Name: 

**Diodorus, a Greek historian, wrote this description of the Celtic men.**

They are very tall, with rippling muscles and clear, white skin. Their hair is blond. They look like wood demons – their hair thick and shaggy, like a horse's mane. They shave their cheeks, but leave a moustache that covers the whole mouth. The way that they dress is astonishing. They wear brightly-coloured and embroidered shirts with trousers, and cloaks fastened at the shoulder with a brooch. These cloaks are striped or checked in design, and in various colours.

**Use the description to complete this picture of a Celtic man.**

