



WELCOME TO THE LAKE DISTRICT

Bogs, boulders and Brigantes

This session introduces the geography of the Lake District and the Brigantes – the Celtic tribe living in the North of England at the time of the Roman occupation. It aims to explore how local conditions made the Lake District difficult for the Romans to invade and control.

CURRICULUM LINKS: HISTORY 2C, 6, 7, 8A, 9

MATHS 3D

GEOG 2C, 3B

OVERVIEW

LEARNING ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY DETAILS	LEARNING INTENTIONS	RESOURCES
STARTER whole class	<i>Mystery object</i> Show pupils a photo of a fragment of a Roman board game and counters. Ask them to guess what they could have been, reminding them of the methods used to analyse objects in Session II. Then show pupils the image of the complete board game. Explain that the class will now play a board game based on the Roman experience in Cumbria.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisiting the idea of archaeology and studying objects from long ago. • Link Roman leisure activities with those of today. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photos of board game fragment and counters (CD Resources 21 & 22) • Photo of complete board game (CD Resource 23)
BOARD GAME small groups	<i>The Roman invasion of the Lake District</i> In small groups, pupils play the board game. They are playing the part of the Roman army, marching north into the Lake District. On the way they encounter numerous challenges and delays faced by the Romans. The first to reach the end of the board has successfully invaded!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To introduce the idea that invading and controlling the Lake District was not easy for the Romans. • To understand several of the key reasons for this. • To introduce the Brigantes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board game instructions (CD Resource 24) • Game board and game cards (CD Resources 25 & 26) • Counters • Dice
PLENARY whole class individual	<i>What made the invasion difficult for the Romans?</i> Pupils record their thoughts on a summary sheet, using their experience of playing the board game.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To highlight three or four key reasons why the invasion was difficult. • To briefly explore these reasons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary worksheet (CD Resource 27)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Outline

The Romans first occupied the Lake District during the reign of Hadrian, AD 117-138. They had been in Cumbria for almost forty years, but had not felt it worthwhile to occupy the very sparsely populated, mountainous area. The change was prompted by a desire to protect Cumbria from invasions along the west coast, and a similar desire to protect the northern frontier during the building of Hadrian's Wall.

The straightest route through the interior to protect the coast was via Hardknott and Wrynose Passes. Hardknott Fort was built to police this route and a fort was built at Ravenglass to protect the coast.

Other roads, such as the famous one over High Street, were built to keep communications routes open. **High Street** linked Ambleside with Brougham and is the highest Roman road in Britain; CD Resource 29 shows the public footpath following the line of the road over the ridge.

The Brigantes

One of the aims of this session is to introduce the Brigantes, the local resident tribe in the north-west at the time of the Roman invasion. Their way of life and the ways this contrasted with the Romans will be explored in Session IV. By the end of Session III, pupils will ideally be aware that the tribe existed, that they lived in the Lake District, and that at first they were hostile to the Romans. There are several pieces of evidence that suggest the Brigantes were hostile to Roman rule. The **Ravenglass military diploma** (CD Resource 30) was given, in AD 155, to a soldier stationed at Ravenglass to control the threat from the Brigantes. An inscription on a **Roman tombstone** (CD Resource 31), at the Armit Collection at Ambleside, says a Roman soldier was 'killed by the enemy' – i.e. the Brigantes – inside the fort. Hostilities eventually died down, and by the third century the Brigantes had become used to the Romans.

The Environment

Other difficulties were created by the mountainous environment, and inhospitable weather of the Lake District. Challenges created by the weather included: freezing conditions; heavy rain; poor visibility for route finding; increased illness; and swollen river crossings. Challenges posed by the landscape included: steep and rugged hillsides; boggy ground; frozen ground; poor soil; forests to clear; large numbers of rivers to cross. All in all, the Romans faced a number of challenges whilst taking control of the Lake District. Their ultimate success was partly due to low population numbers, which allowed the Romans and Brigantes to co-exist fairly happily.

N.B. The two **maps** accompanying Session V (CD Resources 51 and 52), show where the Romans built their forts following the invasion.

ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

MYSTERY OBJECT

Show the class the image of a **fragment of a Roman board game** (CD Resource 21). It is just possible to see lines incised onto the sandstone to make a chequered pattern. Then show the image of two **gaming counters** (CD Resource 22). These were usually made from glass, bone or stone and shaped to fit the gaming board. Ask the class if they have any ideas what the objects might be.

Explain that these objects were identified by comparing them with other, more complete, **board game sets**, including one from Corbridge Roman Fort, on Hadrian's Wall (CD Resource 23).

The Romans may have played these games when visiting the baths, which were seen as places to relax and socialise.

BOARD GAME

The board game is of the straightforward counter and dice variety. Give each small group of pupils a set of **instructions** (CD Resource 24), a **board** (CD Resource 25, two sheets which will need to be taped together), and a set of **game cards** (CD Resource 26, these will be need to cut out in advance). They will also need a dice and counters. Whenever a pupil lands on a 'C' square, they take a card, which will direct them to move forwards or backwards a certain number of squares or miss a certain number of throws. Shuffle the cards before handing them out.

SUMMARY WORKSHEET

Two versions are provided, one with an extension activity for more able pupils. Discuss the difficulties faced by the Romans as a class before asking children to work on the sheets individually.