



THE DAILY ACTIVITIES OF PEOPLE DURING THE IRON AGE

CORE CONCEPTS

The aim of this resource is to encourage learners to understand how the way people live has changed over time. Understanding what people had to get done in a day during the Iron Age helps learners to appreciate how communities evolve into the communities we have today.

STATEMENTS OF WHAT MATTERS LINKS:

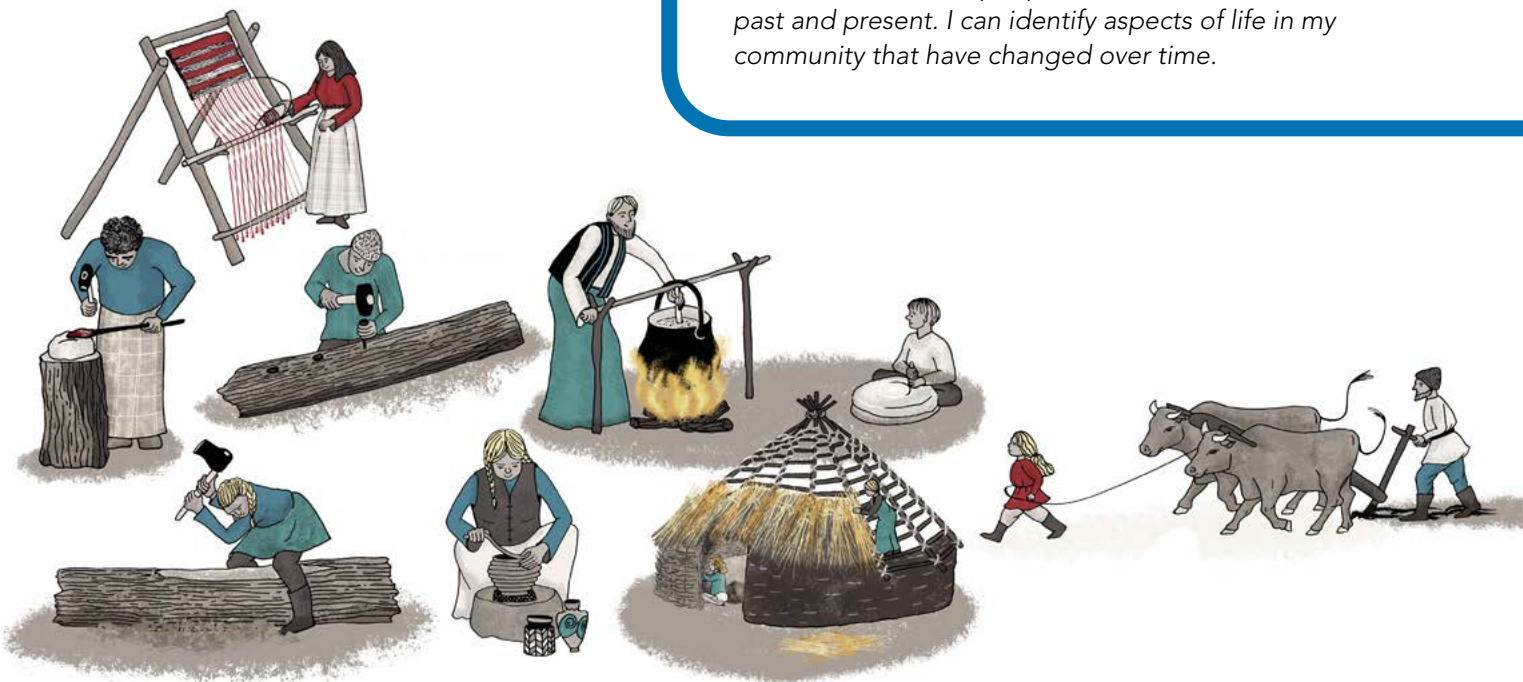
HUMANITIES – Human societies are complex and diverse, and shaped by human actions and beliefs. This resource focuses specifically on concepts surrounding **chronology, change and continuity, community,** and **identity** and **belonging.**

This resource is intended for **progression step 2,** but could be adapted for use at other progression steps. The resource contributes to progression by focusing learning on the following descriptions of learning:



DESCRIPTIONS OF LEARNING

HUMANITIES: *I can recognise similarities and differences between people's lives, both in the past and present. I can identify aspects of life in my community that have changed over time.*



GUIDANCE

When you spend time thinking about what you get done in a day, you might find that your basic needs (such as getting water, food and keeping warm) are met quite easily. This has not always been the case, and life was challenging before the modern day.

Getting water, growing crops for food, hunting, weaving baskets, making food, cooking, making tools, building and maintaining houses and collecting fuel took time and was necessary for the survival of an Iron Age community.

The Iron Age in Wales existed from 800 BC to AD 74, and people lived in smaller communities than our villages, towns, and cities we have today. They within hillforts and promontory forts, such as the image of the reconstruction of Dinas Dinlle in Gwynedd.

In the illustration below, you can observe some of the activities that were carried out on a daily basis during the Iron Age. Everyone from the community was involved, and these activities include:

WEAVING

This was done to make textiles such as clothes and blankets. Weaving was done on a loom, which is an upright structure, and weights made from stone were tied to the bottom of the threads to hold the tension. Vegetable fibres from flax or hemp, and wool from sheep was often used to make textiles. We still use these fibres for certain textiles today!

FARMING

People grew crops including oats, barley, wheat and rye, and vegetables such as onions, turnips, parsnips, cabbage, and herbs. They would have reared animals including goats, sheep, pigs, chickens, and cattle for milk and meat, and they used iron tools to help with ploughing and other farming techniques.

METALWORK

The development of metalwork is an important step in human history as it helped create a wide variety of tools that were used in everyday life. The Bronze Age was the first technological leap after stone tools, but the discovery of iron was another big leap because it allowed harder and tougher tools.

CARPENTRY

There are two illustrations here which depict carpentry: one of which includes a person chopping wood using iron axes to split up the tree trunk, another one is showing a person carving out a canoe. Being able to use wood for fuel, make building materials, and construct transportation vehicles was essential to the Iron Age communities.

COOKING

Cooking was part of the daily activities as it was necessary to feed the whole community. Cooking was performed in open pots hung over a fire in the centre of the houses, and bread was baked on griddles on a charcoal fire.

GRINDING THE GRAIN

Another illustration shows a child grinding grain using a rotary quern stone. This was a necessary daily activity to grind enough grain to make flour, which could then be made into bread. The hole in the centre was filled with grain and once it had been milled, flour spilled out between the two stones.

BUILDING HOUSES

Making an Iron Age settlement required building houses. People lived in round houses with thatched roofs, with the walls made of wattle and daub. Wattle and daub is constructed by weaving a lattice of sticks and then coating the sticks with a mixture of clay, mud, animal dung and hair (such as horse hair) or straw.

POTTERY

Clay was moulded to make pots and then fired (to make the clay dry out and harden) under a bonfire or in a shallow pit. Pots would have been used for food preparation, storage, drinking vessels or cooking jars.



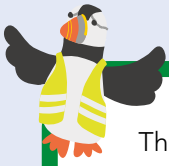
A reconstruction of Dinas Dinlle Hillfort in Gwynedd.
Reconstruction by Wessex Archaeology.



An illustration of an iron age round house.



A reconstruction of life inside an Iron Age Roundhouse.
Reconstruction by Wessex Archaeology.



The suggested activities in this resource are intended to demonstrate to learners some of the activities carried out in the daily lives of people living in the Iron Age. It can be emphasised that children would have contributed to daily tasks and learnt skills as they worked, as there was no school like there is today – and children might have had useful abilities that adults didn't have, like better eyesight for hunting, or nimble fingers for making and mending things.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Discuss what activities you get done in a day and compare this with the daily lives of people during the Iron Age using the illustrations. Pupils can also identify the activities within the round house reconstruction and discuss the similarities and differences between life in the Iron Age and today. Another depiction of life in the Iron Age can be found [here](#).
- Here are some links to resources that can be used alongside this resource to explain what life was like during the Iron Age.

[What was the Iron Age?](#)

[What was life like in the Iron Age?](#)

- Build a model Iron Age round house.
- Make a wattle and daub wall.
- Bake bread.
- Make your own war paints from natural materials.
- Create a picture of a scene in the Iron Age to demonstrate what life was like for people.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

MAKE YOUR OWN WAR PAINTS

MATERIALS

- Pestle and mortar
- Blue/purple – blackberries, blackcurrants, blueberries,
- Green – spinach, green leaves
- Red – red cabbage, beetroot, rose petals, cranberries, strawberries
- Yellow – turmeric, pollen, mustard powder

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place your fruit in the mortar and crush with a pestle. You can also use a blender to grind the spinach, cabbage, beetroot.
2. Grind petals, leaves, or other dry items before mixing with a tiny bit of honey.
3. Mix your ingredients with a small amount of water
4. Use a sieve or a muslin to strain the pigment. Add water to get the right consistency.
5. Mix the turmeric, pollen or mustard powder with a small amount of water.
6. Use your paints to create a picture based on the theme of the lesson.

MAKE A WATTLE AND DAUB WALL

You may be able to find appropriate twigs on the school premises. You can get the children to select and cut the best twigs. This activity can be done indoors or outdoors.

MATERIALS

- Secateurs or scissors
- Long matchsticks or straight twigs or 10mm dowels
- Straw or flexible twigs (such as willow or hazel)
- Oasis
- Flour and water or clay

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place your matchsticks/straight twigs upright into the oasis block equal distances apart.
2. Weave the straw or willow through the matchsticks, alternating the weave on either side of the twig (see picture).
3. Mix some flour and water to make a paste and daub it on the straw/willow.
4. Add more flour if your paste is too wet and is dripping off the straws/willow.
5. Leave overnight to let the paste set.



MAKE A MODEL ROUND HOUSE

MATERIALS

- Undecorated vine wreath (15cm diameter will do)
- Clay
- String
- Pipe cleaners
- Raffia
- Twine
- Square of cardboard (optional)
- Glue (optional)
- Moss (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Tie together two wreaths with string.
2. To make the roof structure, create a cone shape structure using pipe cleaners.
3. Daub the walls with clay and smooth the walls out with your thumbs.
4. Tie bundles of raffia together using twine or string. Starting at the bottom of the roof beams, tie each small bundle to the roof beams.
5. Place your round house on the square of cardboard and decorate around the roundhouse with moss.

MAKING ARTEFACTS

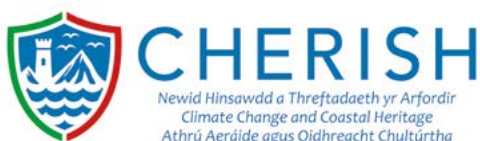
MATERIALS

- A plum sized piece of modelling clay per child
- Square of cardboard

INSTRUCTIONS

POTS: take a ball of clay and flatten it into a disc. Place on the cardboard to prevent it sticking to the table. Take another ball of clay and roll it into a snake shape. Attach the roll of clay to the base and trim any excess clay after it has gone once around the diameter of the base. Smooth out the joint. Continue attaching rolls of clay, stacking one on top of another. Smooth out the joins and smooth out the outside and inside surface of the pot. Use a little water to help smooth out the clay if it is too dry. Use a pencil to create a design on the outside of the pot.

TO MAKE A COIN: Roll out some clay and use round cutters to create coins. Use a pencil or other decorating tools to decorate the coin.



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Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales